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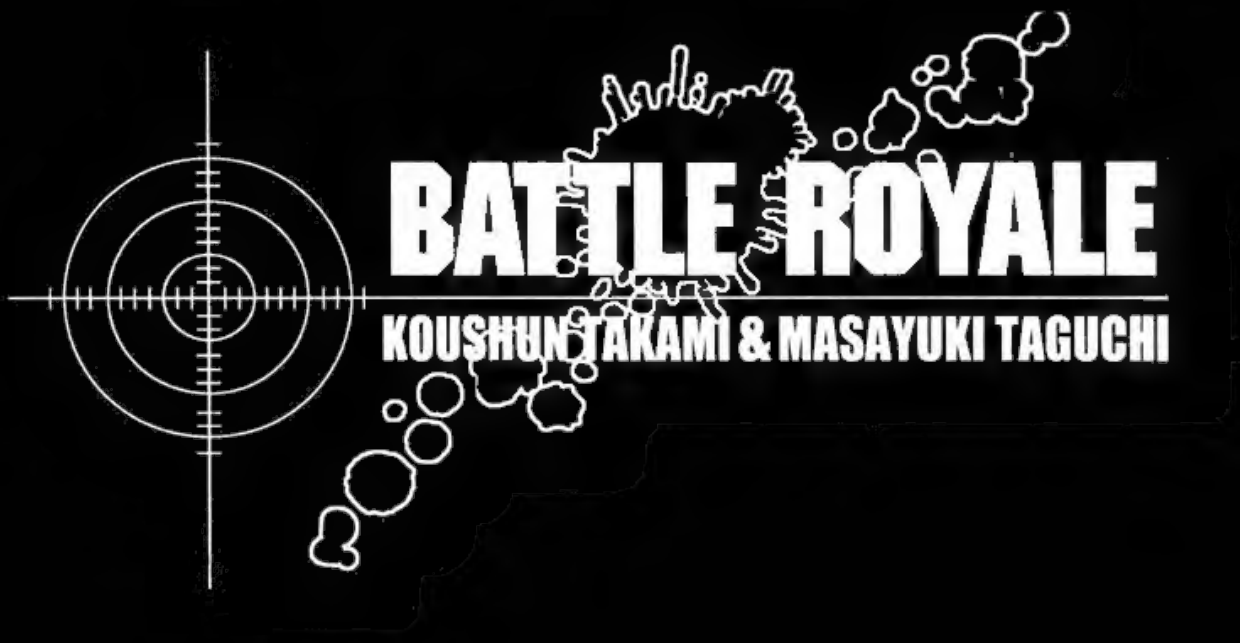
BATTLE ROYALE
KOUSHUN TAKAMI & MASAYUKI TAGUCHI

Battle Royale Vol. 15

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BATTLE ROYALE

BY

KOUSHUN TAKAMI & MASAYUKI TAGUCHI

VOL. 15

TOKYOPOP®

HAMBURG // LONDON // LOS ANGELES // TOKYO

BATTLE ROYALE

SHIRO IWA Junior High School - Grade 9/Class B - Student Roster

Boys: 21 - Girls: 21 - Total: 42

15: Noriko Nakagawa

8: Kayoko Kotohiki

1: Mizuho Inada

15: Shuuya Nanahara

8: Yoji Kuramoto

1: Yoshio Akamatsu

16: Yuka Nakagawa

9: Yuko Sakaki

2: Yukio Utsumi

16: Kazushi Niida

9: Hiroshi Kuronaga

2: Keita Iijima

17: Satomi Noda

10: Hirono Shimizu

3: Megumi Etou

17: Mitsuru Numai

10: Ryuhei Sasagawa

3: Tatsumichi Ooki

18: Fumiyo Fujiyoshi

11: Mitsuko Souma

4: Sakura Ogawai

18: Tadakatsu Hatagami

11: Hiroki Sugimura

4: Toshinori Oda

19: Chisato Matsui

12: Haruka Tanizawa

5: Izumi Kanai

19: Shinji Mimura

12: Yutaka Sato

5: Shogo Kawada

20: Kaori Minami

13: Takako Chigusa

6: Yukiko Kitano

20: Kyoichi Motobuchi

13: Yuichiro Takiguchi

6: Kazuo Kiriyama

21: Yoshimi Yahagi

14: Mayumi Tendo

7: Yumiko Kusaka

21: Kazuhiko Yamamoto

14: Sho Tsukioka

7: Yoshitoki Kuninobu

BATTLE ROYALE

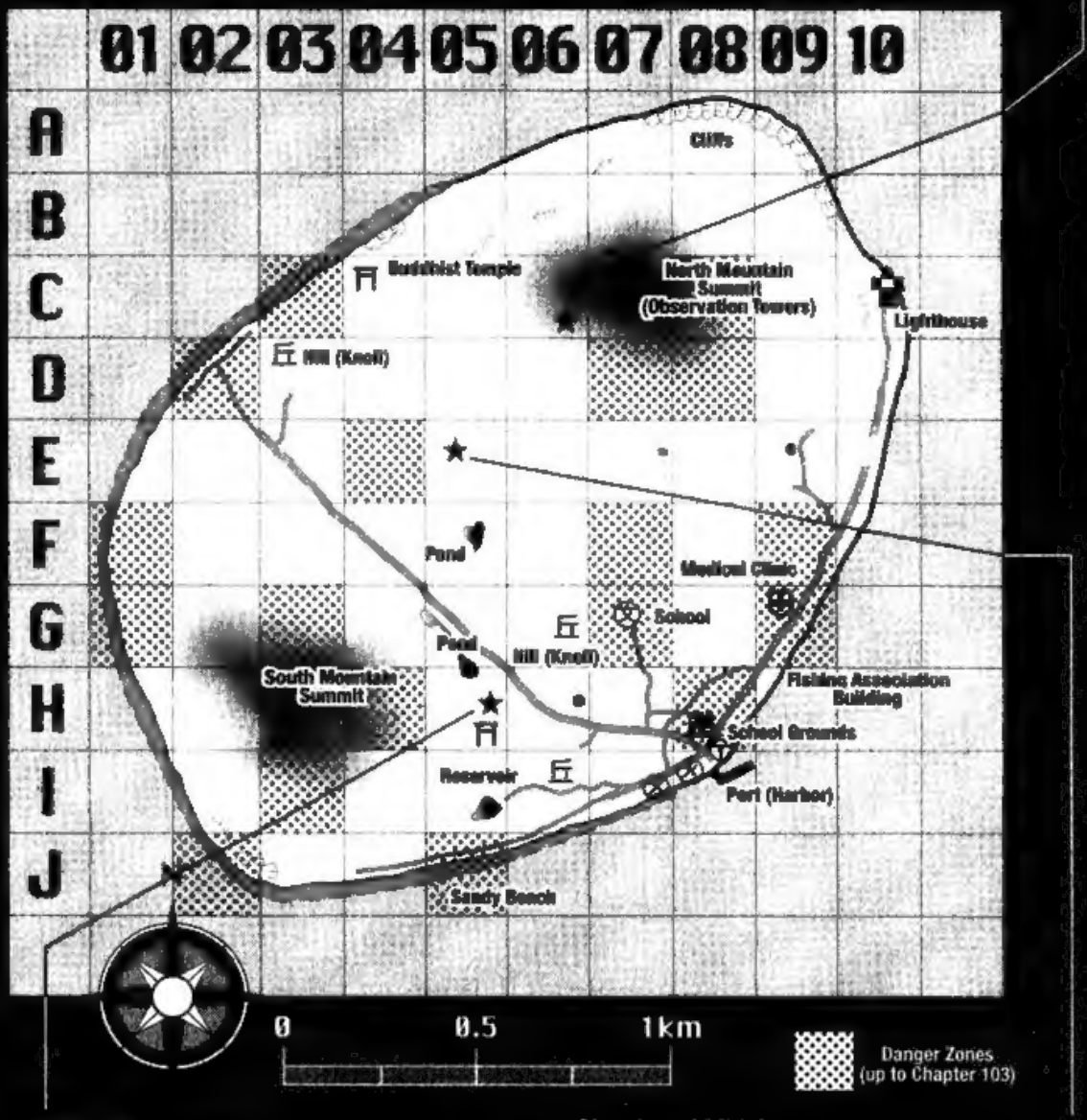
THE PROGRAM: UPDATE

CHAPTERS 96-111

PROGRAM CONDITIONS:

All members of the class must kill each other until one survivor remains. • All students are supplied with a ration of food, a map of the island, and a weapon. • All students will wear an explosive bomb collar that also monitors life signs. • Students are free to move about the island but must stay out of designated danger zones that will frequently change locations. • If there is more than one survivor at the end of the game, the remaining bomb collars will be detonated.

Chapter 103

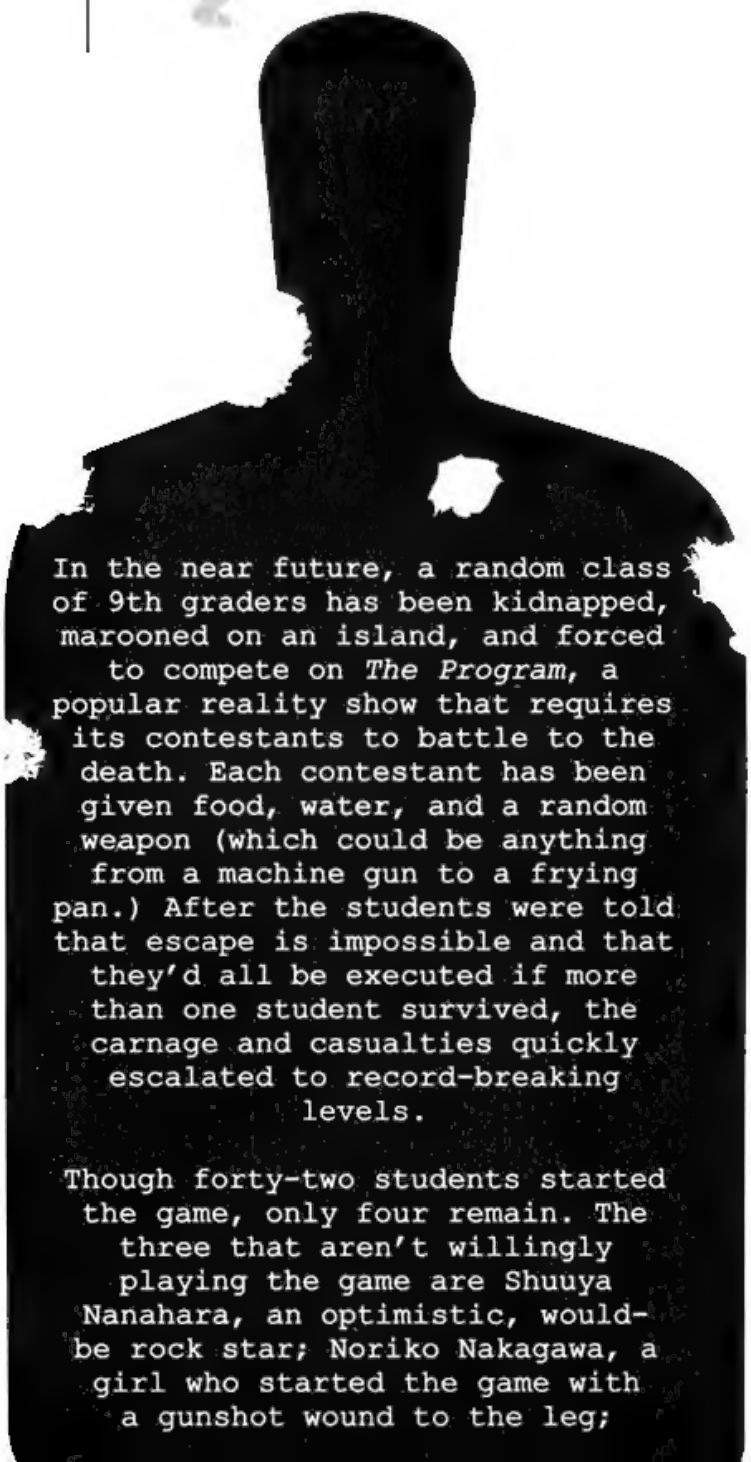


Chapter 96

Chapters 100-103

BATTLE ROYALE

STORY THUS FAR

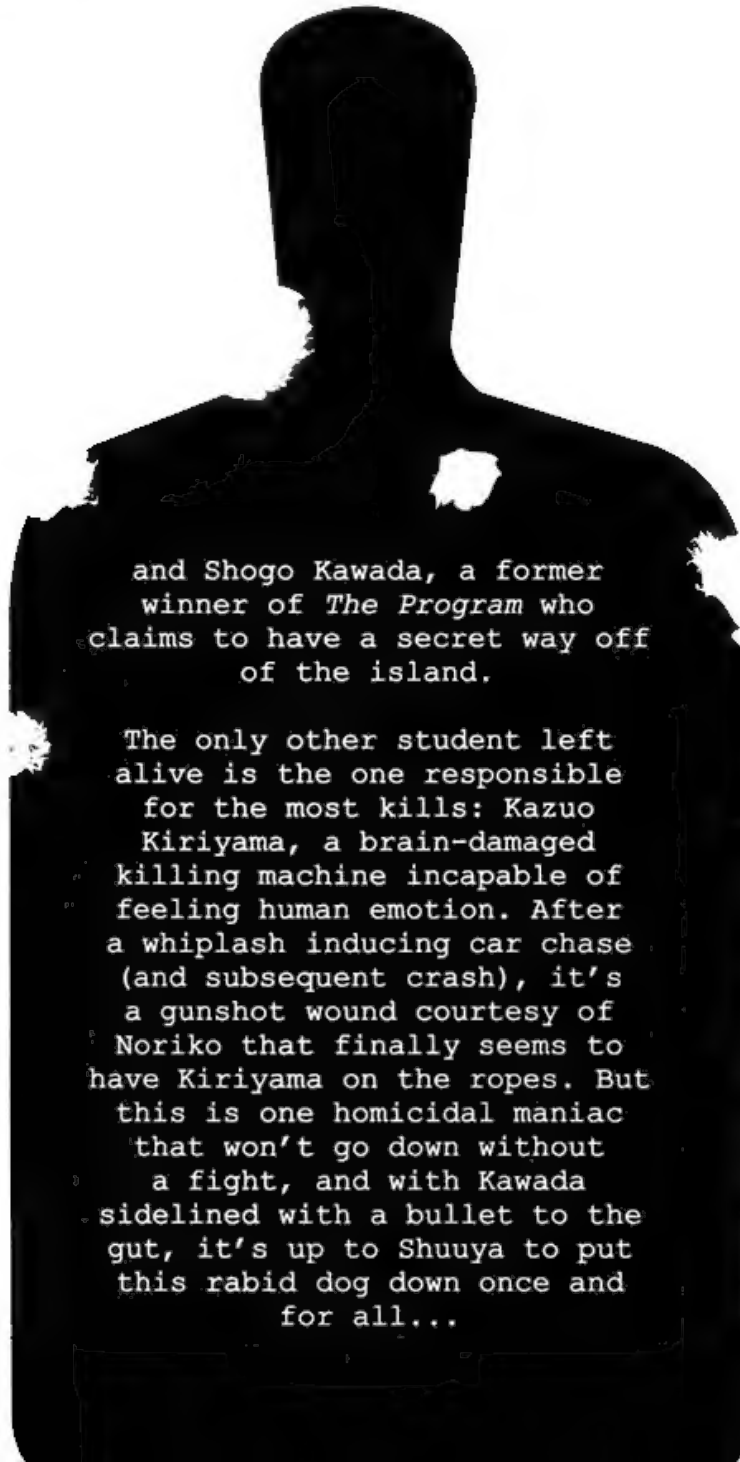


In the near future, a random class of 9th graders has been kidnapped, marooned on an island, and forced to compete on *The Program*, a popular reality show that requires its contestants to battle to the death. Each contestant has been given food, water, and a random weapon (which could be anything from a machine gun to a frying pan.) After the students were told that escape is impossible and that they'd all be executed if more than one student survived, the carnage and casualties quickly escalated to record-breaking levels.

Though forty-two students started the game, only four remain. The three that aren't willingly playing the game are Shuuya Nanahara, an optimistic, would-be rock star; Noriko Nakagawa, a girl who started the game with a gunshot wound to the leg;

BATTLE ROYALE

STORY THUS FAR



and Shogo Kawada, a former winner of *The Program* who claims to have a secret way off of the island.

The only other student left alive is the one responsible for the most kills: Kazuo Kiriyama, a brain-damaged killing machine incapable of feeling human emotion. After a whiplash inducing car chase (and subsequent crash), it's a gunshot wound courtesy of Noriko that finally seems to have Kiriyama on the ropes. But this is one homicidal maniac that won't go down without a fight, and with Kawada sidelined with a bullet to the gut, it's up to Shuuya to put this rabid dog down once and for all...

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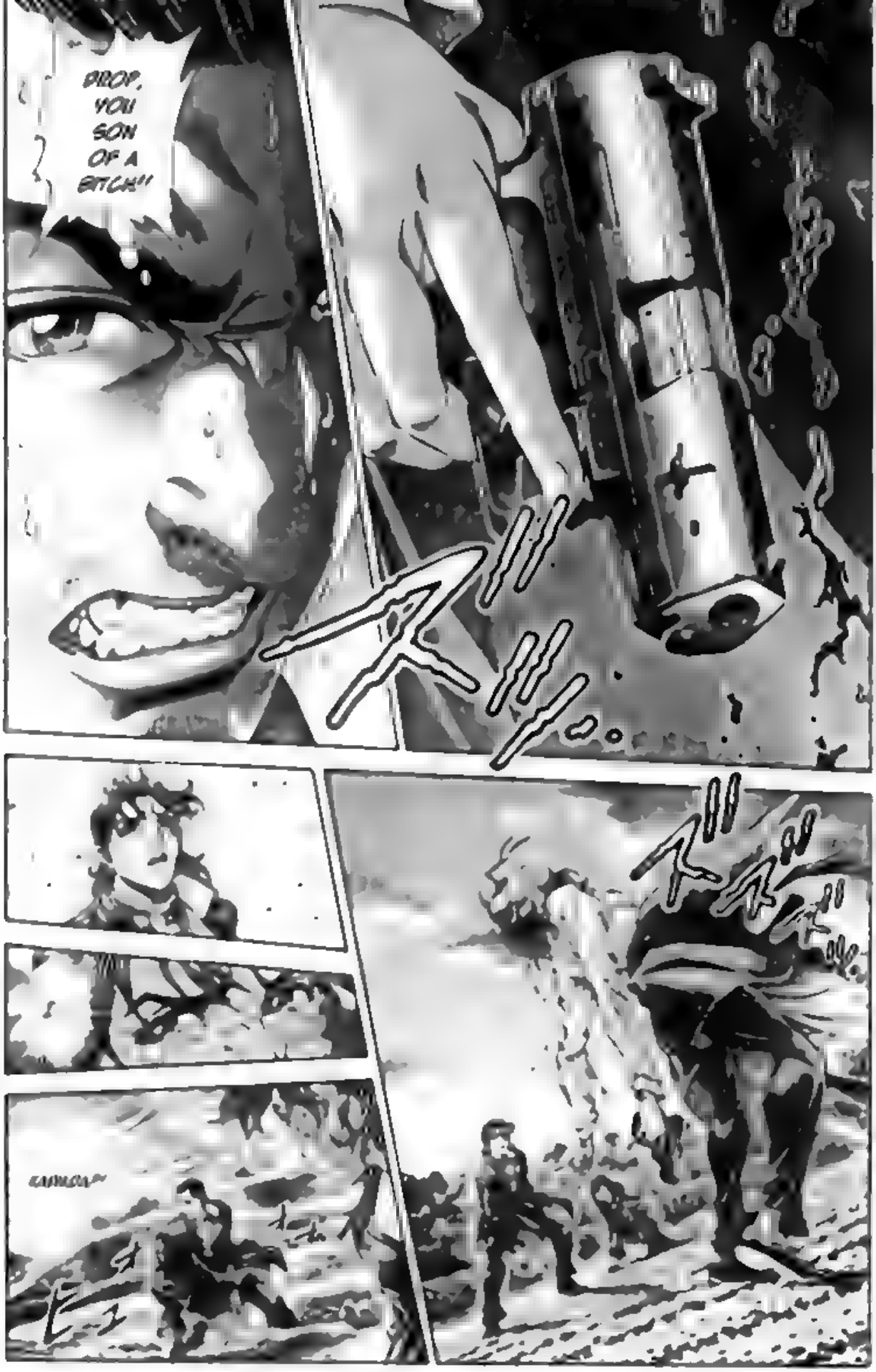
YOU GO THROUGH ME FIRST! YOU GO THROUGH ME!!
DO RIGHT BY HER...
...WHEN IT COUNTS MOST.

CHAPTER 112: Cause and Effect

THUD

ヒュオオ
ギョロオ

!!
!!
DAMN
CHAK


DROP, YOU SON OF A BITCH!!
GAHHH!!

SHUU-YA.
YOU DID IT! YOU ACTED WHEN YOU HAD TO.
TOOK NORIKO TO PULL IT OUT OF YOU. BUT YOU DID IT!
WHEN IT COUNTED MOST, YOU PULLED THROUGH
STICK WITH IT!
IF IT WAS THAT EASY, THERE'D BE NO GAME!
KI-KI.
YOU STICK WITH IT FOR HER! HE'S NOT DOWN YET!
YOU FOCUS ON HER! WHATEVER IT TAKES, YOU DO RIGHT BY NORIKO! WHATEVER IT TAKES!

DID IT... I DID IT...
IT... I HAD TO! I HAD TO!!
GOT YOU, KIRIYAMA! GOT YOU!
NOT NORIKO! NEVER NORIKO!
ZU ZU ZU..
?!
DOWN ... GO DOWN !!

HE'S NOT GOING DOWN!!
TWO...
MINE...
CLUTCH SHOT, MIMURA...
ALL YOURS, SHU...

CLUTCH SHOT, MIMURA!
IT'S ALL YOURS... DO NOT FAIL ME AGAIN
HA-HA-HA...
HA-HA-HA...

I HAD HIM DEAD BANG. BUSTED ME UP SOMETHING FIERCE... BUT I HAD HIM DEAD FUCKING BANG!
I HAD HIM, SHU...
BUT I MISSED WHEN IT COUNTED ...

TAKE THE FUCKER DOWN FOR GOOD!
ONE SHOT, SHU.-DO NOT FUCK UP!!

I HAD HIM AND I BLEW IT...
HE KILLED YUTAKA ...

...I'M THINKING IT'S HIS TURN, SHU. DO IT!!
HE KILLED SO MANY...

TAKE THE SHOT!!
DO IT!!

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More days ago, 42 students were marooned on an island, given random weapons and ordered to kill or be killed. Now only four remain alive...but that's still three too many. As our heroes are confronted with a grisly end, one will be forced to betray the others in the ultimate sacrifice. Will anyone make it out of *The Program* alive?

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EXPLICIT CONTENT
PARENTAL ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

ENGLISH ADAPTATION BY KEITH GIFFEN

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CHAPTER 113: Destiny

DO IT..
FOR GOD'S SAKE, SHU..

SOMEONE DRAWS DOWN ON HER--YOU DRAW DOWN ON THEM.
PROTECT NORIKO. PRIME DIRECTIVE, SHUUYA. PROTECT HER NO MATTER WHAT.
WHO-GYAH IT HA...
..YOU SHOOT--PERIOD.

SHOOT THE MOTHER-FUCKER!! FINISH IT!!

YOU PROTECT NORIKO-- PERIOD!!
YOU SHOOT... SHOOT TO KILL...

NO HESITATION... NO MERCY...
...NO REGRET.

HOW MANY'D HE KILL, SHU? NO HESITATION... NO MERCY...

NO REGRET...
YOUR FRIENDS, SHU, MIMURA, SUGIMURA...
...NO REGRET.

HE WON'T ADD HER TO THE LIST...
TAKE THE SHOT.

SHOOT...!
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO
IS AIM IT AND PULL
DADDY NEVER LEFT!! DADDY NEVER LEFT MITSU!! I CAN FEEL HIM!!
HE DOESN'T ADD NORIKO TO THE LIST!!!

PUT HIM DOWN, SHU...
HE WON'T-- CAN'T-- DO IT!
GOODAMMIT, SHUUYA! YOU'RE GONNA GET US KILLED?!
SHIT!

I KNOW...
.....
IT'S US OR HIM! CAP THE FUCKER!!
SHOOT HIM!! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU WAITING FOR?!
SHIIU-YA!!
TAKE THE FUCKING SHOT!!

.....
HE'S GOT TO KNOW...
HE'S GOT TO KNOW IT'S COMING...

HE'S GOT TO FEEL IT!!
SHUUYA? YOU'VE GOT TO...

HE'S GOT TO KNOW... TO FEEL... ALL OF IT!!

IT'S NOT ENOUGH...
JUST KILLING HIM'S NOT ENOUGH...

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CHAPTER 114: Determination

NO HESITATION...
NO MERCY...
NO REGRET...

HOW MANY FINGERS ARE ON THIS TRIGGER?
TOO MANY, KIRIYAMA.
KA-!..

SOME OF THEM DID THE RIGHT THING...
TOO MANY...

...WHILE OTHERS LOST THEIR WAY.

THEN THERE WERE THOSE WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE FOUND.

SOME THOUGHT THEY HAD ALL THE ANSWERS...
...WHILE OTHERS' BELIEFS LET THEM DOWN.
SOME GAVE IN TO THE FEAR...

THERE WERE THOSE...
...OTHERS YIELDED TO THE PAIN.
...AND TRUSTED TOO LITTLE.
...WHO CARED TOO MUCH...

...ONE FOUND HER FAITH. I DON'T EVEN THINK SHE KNEW IT HAD GONE...
AND ONE...
THAT ONE... SHE DIED HAPPY.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS LOOK...
FUNNY HOW IT ALWAYS HIDES IN PLAIN SIGHT...
AND SOME SOME FOUND THEIR HEART'S DESIRE.
SHE KNEW ALL ALONG.
HADN'T BEEN FOR THIS, I MIGHT NEVER HAVE LOOKED...

AT LEAST NOT THAT I EVER HEARD.
AND YOU THOUGHT... WHAT?
ALL THE OTHER GIRLS NEVER HAD A BAD WORD...
AND THE GIRLS...
...TO SAY ABOUT HER.
NO CRISIS OF CONSCIENCE--NOT NORIKO. THAT WAS RESERVED FOR YOURS TRULY.
SHE SAID SHE HAD FAITH IN US...IN ME...
THAT WAS WAY BEFORE I HAD FAITH IN MYSELF.
THAT'S JUST HER WAY. SHE'S ALWAYS THINKING THE BEST OF PEOPLE...
ALWAYS BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN PEOPLE...

SO TELL ME, KIRIYAMA...HOW MANY FINGERS ARE ON THE TRIGGER?!

THAT WE'D LET YOU KILL HER...?

EVERY LAST ONE!!
!!
YOU KNOW IT'S COMING.
DO YOU FEEL IT NOW? DO YOU FEEL WHAT THEY FELT?

I JUST WANTED YOU TO KNOW...
OH, GOD ...
IT...
IT ENDS HERE.
I JUST WANTED YOU TO KNOW YOU'VE LOST!!

SMITI
SHUU-
?A!!
SHUUYA?!
OMIGOD!
SHUUYA
!!
NO!!
!!

!!
NO...
YOU DON'T GET SHUU-YA...!! H-HE... HE'S MINE!!

GROW A SET.
?!

I FIND A GIRL I LIKE
AND YOU'RE LOOKING TO GET HER KILLED
& THEN YOU SHOOT HIM!

SHE'S GIVEN YOU NO CHOICE. DO IT.
NO CHOICE, SHU...
...OR HE SHOOTS HER.
STOP LOOKING FOR REASONS NOT TO... F'GOD'S SAKE...!!! GROW A SET!!
NORIKO KNOWS...

END GAME, SHUUYA. TAKE THE SHOT!!
ONLY MY FINGER ON THE TRIGGER THIS TIME!! ONLY MY FINGER, MOTHER FUCKER!!

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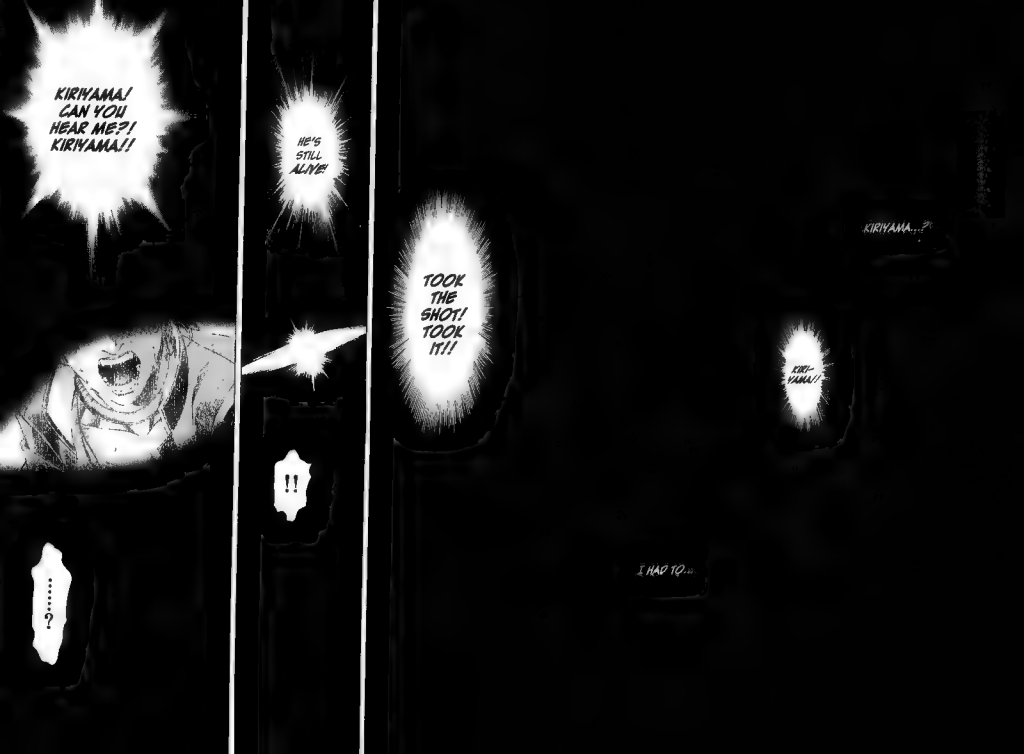
CHAPTER 115: One's Last Moment

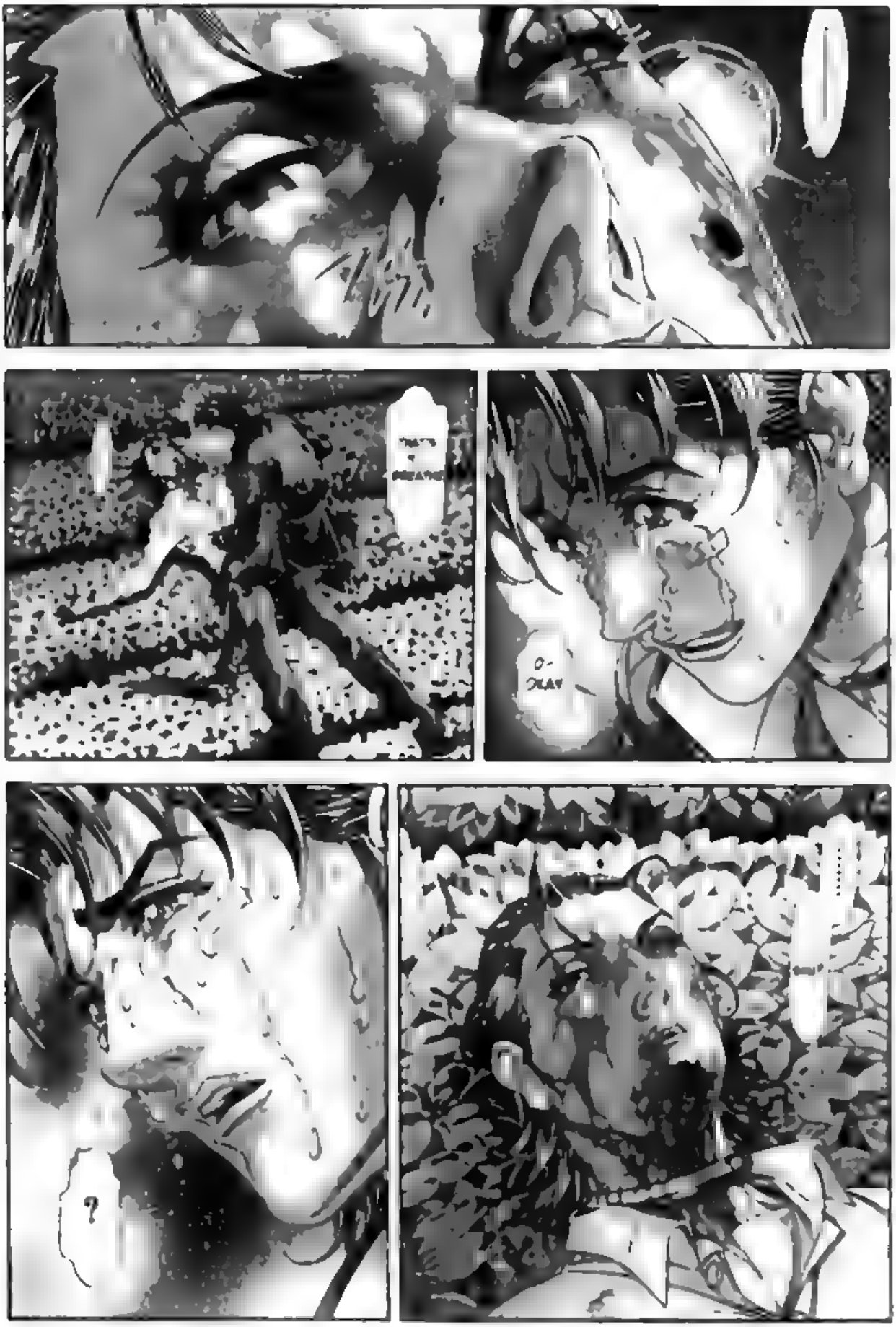
CHAPTER 115: One's Last Moment


KIRIYAMA! CAN YOU HEAR ME?! KIRIYAMA!!
……?
HE'S STILL ALIVE!
!!
TOOK THE SHOT! TOOK IT!!
I HAD TO...
KIRI-YAMA!!
KIRIYAMA...?

HE'S STILL ALIVE! WHAT DO WE—?
HE'S STILL ALIVE!!
I-I HAD TO! I HAD TO!!
……

THIS DIDN'T HAVE TO HAPPEN! YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO THIS!
I DIDN'T WANT TO PLAY! WHY DID YOU... I DIDN'T WANT TO PLAY! WHY DID YOU MAKE ME?!
WHY DID YOU MAKE ME PLAY?!
I-I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO I...
!!
I DON'T WANT TO WIN! THERE IS NO WINNER! HOW COULD YOU BE SO SMART AND NOT KNOW THAT?!
WE WE CAN TAKE YOU WITH US! WE CAN GET YOU HELP! KIRIYAMA? KIRI-YAMA!

I DIDN'T WANT TO PLAY!!

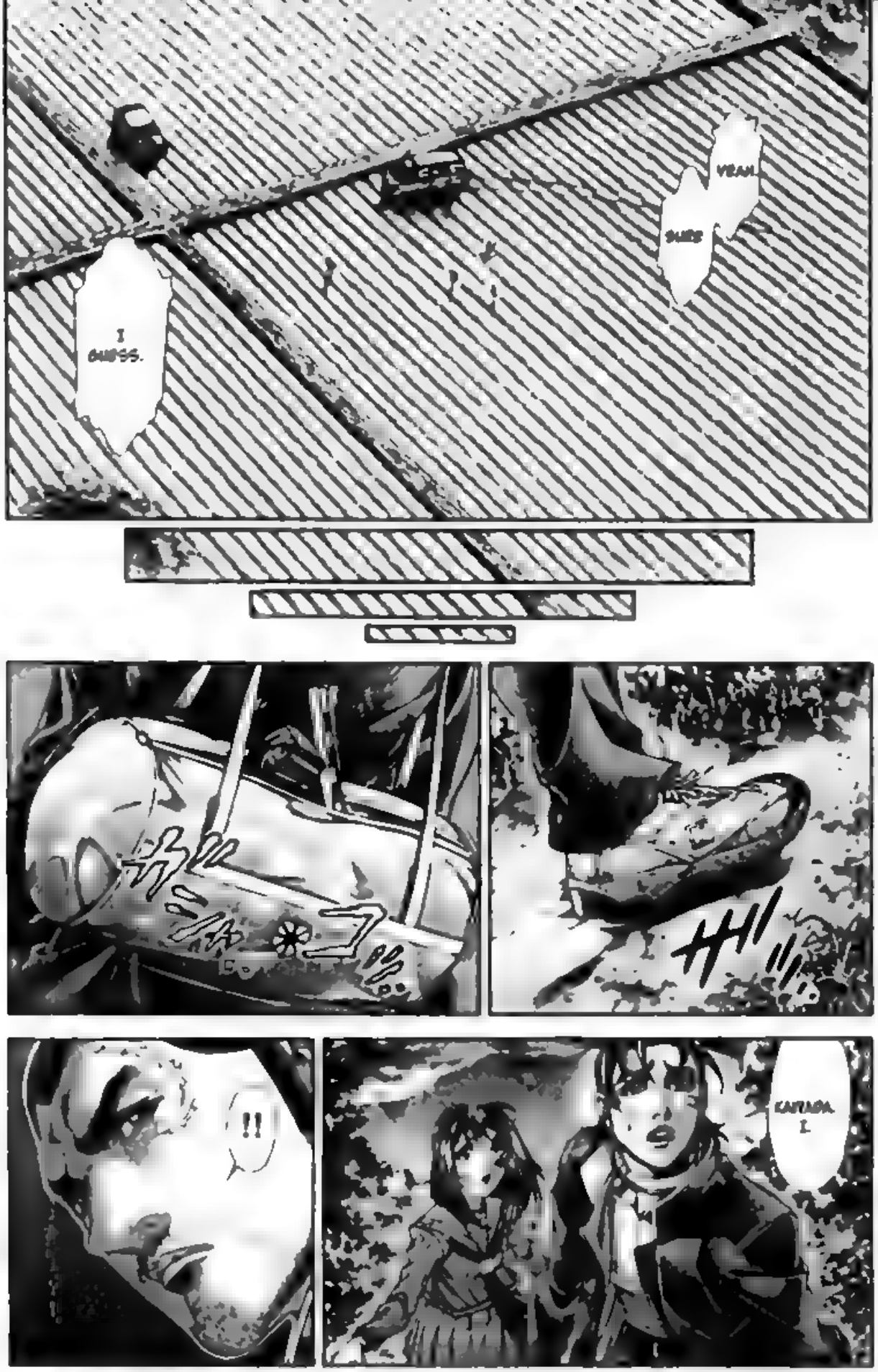


!!
I CAN FEEL AGAIN

!!
NO! KIRIYAMA!!
DON'T YOU FUCKING DARE! I'M NOT THE WINNER! YOU CAN'T! MOTHERFUCKER! YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME!!

!!
CLEAN WOUND FIGURED AS MUCH, THE WAY YOU WERE WAVING IT AROUND. GONNA HURT LIKE A BITCH.
SHIIIIYA. IT'S OVER. NO ONE WINS REMEMBER?
.....
I.. HE
HE'S DEAD!
.....
I...
...I KILLED HIM.
WILD?
YOU DID GOOD. OH, AND I'M FINE, THANKS FOR ASKING.
FIRST KILL ALWAYS GOES DOWN HARDEST
.....

JUST GOT ONE MORE THING NEEDS DOING AND WE ARE OUT OF HERE
THAT LIGHT YOU SEE'S THE END OF THE TUNNEL
GET YOUR HEAD ON STRAIGHT
TAKE A PEW
.....
!!
GIVE THE BOSS A RUN FOR HIS MONEY ROCK AND ROLL AND RAKE IT IN ..
OFF TO AMERICA WITH NORIKO, EIGHT?


I GUESS.
YEAH.
SURE
!!
CATALINA.

IT'S JUST US RIGHT? JUST THE NEEDS OF US?
WHAT BLOOD NEEDS DOING IF IT'S JUST THE NEEDS OF US? I MEAN...
IT'S NOT JUST US THE SOLDIERS
I KNOW WHAT HE MEANS
C'MON IT'S NOT MUCH FARTHER

— GETTING HOME? MORILO'S RIGHT...
SHOULDN'T WE BE, LIKE
O-KAAAY
CLOSURE IT'S ALL ABOUT CLOSURE
DEEP LIBERATING BREATH. YOU CAN'T F OUT
CHECK OUT THE VIEW — THAT'S YOUR PERSPECTIVE ISN'T IT? HOME SWEET HOME?
THIS IS THE LAST TIME YOU'LL EVER SEE IT. THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO SAY "GOODBYE."
LIKE I SAID, IT'S ALL ABOUT CLOSURE ENDGAME

OKAY
NEXT..
?
EVERYTHING I'D HEARD ABOUT IT IS GONE. NOT YOU, NOELLE ..
WE DIDN'T LET IT GO IT LET US GO WHEN IT GAVE US OVER TO THE PROGRAM
IT'S NOT OURS ANY-MORE
IT LOOKS SO PEACEFUL FROM HERE
.....
.....
WE LEAVE HERE WE LEAVE CLEAN LET'S HAVE IT
FORK OVER THE GUNS FROM HERE ON, THERE'S A LABILITY
WE'VE COME A LONG WAY
TRUSTED ONE ANOTHER TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT
REALLY HARD TO COME BY, TRUST
SO WHAT'S OUR NEXT MOVE?

I TRUSTED YOU GUYS NOT TO KILL ME IN MY SLEEP ..AND YOU GUYS TRUSTED ME TO KEEP YOU SAFE UNTIL WE COULD GET OFF THE ISLAND. YEAH...
GUESS IT'S TIME YOU KNEW HOW I'M GETTING OFF THE ISLAND. THAT'S RIGHT.. "I'M." I DON'T PLAY PRONOUN GAMES YOU TWO HAVE, I BELIEVE THE TERM IS...
...
"OUTLIVED YOUR USEFUL-NESS."
DON'T GET ME WRONG-- IT WAS FUN WHILE IT LASTED. BUT...
?
KAWADA? WHAT ARE YOU...?
I...
IT'S JUST THE THREE OF US LEFT.
THREE DON'T CUT IT.

YOU CAN'T BE KARADA!?
KA-KARA?

I'M GETTING OFF THIS ISLAND THE SAME WAY I GOT OUT OF THAT FUCKING GHETTO THEY STUCK US IN LAST TIME. ONLY ONE WINNER LEAVES YOU KNEW THAT GOING IN

BATTLE ROYALE

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CHAPTER 116: Deception

CHAPTER 116: Deception
YOU... W-WE...
W-NOT PUSSY KARAOKE

NOW YOU LET US IN ON IT
NOW YOU LET US IN ON THE JOKE -RIGHT?
HH!
HH!
NO JOKE THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY OUT OF HERE AND I'M TAKING IT.

BUT Y
YOU
YOU
I DID
WHAT
NEEDED
DOING
YOU TWO
ARE TOO
RESISTING
TOO
KNOW
I KILLED THE
ONLY PERSON
EVER MEANT
ANYTHING TO
ME DO THE
MATH!
I NEED
YOU HALF
THE STORY
AND YOU
BUT IT AS
A WHOLE
YOU TWO
TELL Y ARE
PERFECT
FOR ONE
ANOTHER

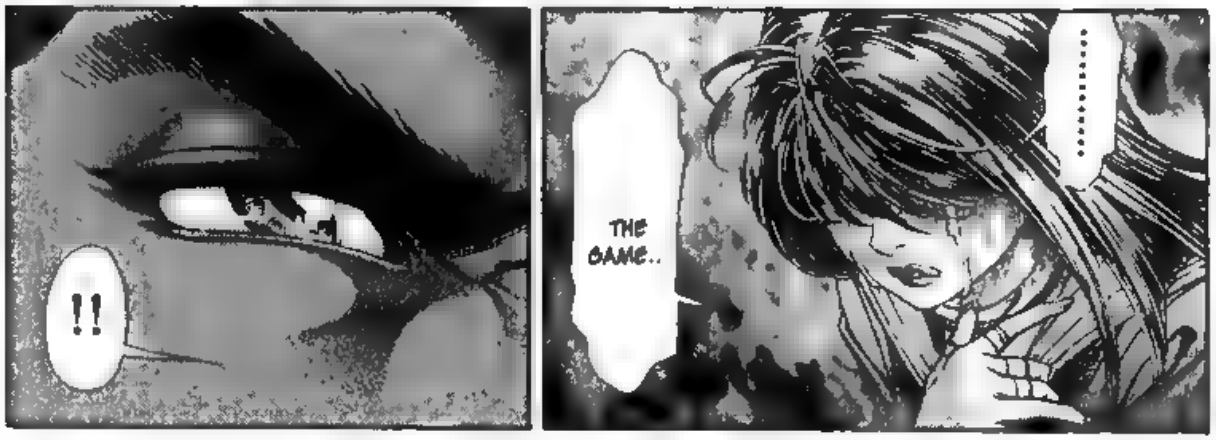
THIS IS BULL-SHIT, MAN! I KNOW YOU!
I KNOW YOU, KAWADA! HOW MANY TIMES DID YOU SAVE OUR LIVES?!
TOGETHER...
IT'S US WE PUT IT TOGETHER
WE BEAT THEM AT THEIR OWN GAME!
.....

YOU TWO WERE DEAD THE MINUTE YOU DECIDED TO TRUST ME. ON THE SMART SCALE?
ABOUT A NEGATIVE THREE.
BUT I'M NOT TOTALLY HEARTLESS. I BROUGHT YOU TWO UP HERE FOR A LAST LOOK AT HOME.
BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT-- IT IS VERY MUCH A LAST LOOK.
.....
.....
AND MY OWN BY EXTENSION

TWO IN A ROW. THAT'S GOT TO COUNT FOR SOMETHING, RIGHT? THIS TIME THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO SHUNT ME ASIDE. A STAR IS BORN, KIDDIES
KIRI-YAMA. HE.
YOU'RE NO BETTER THAN KIRIYAMA!! NO--YOU'RE WORSE!!
YOU CAN'T DO THIS! THIS ISN'T YOU!!
FUCKER...!
I HAD
I HAD FAITH IN YOU.
BUT I'LL MAKE IT QUICK. I OWE YOU THAT MUCH.
BREAKING MY HEART HERE, NOEL.

I MEAN HAVE!
THIS...
...YOU CAN'T FAKE IT, KAWADA! YOU CAN'T FAKE WHAT THE THREE OF US HAD!
WHAT THE THREE OF US HAVE! HOW 'BOUT YOU DO THE MATH FOR ONCE, HUH?!

...THEN IT'S THREE MINUS THREE EQUALS FUCK ALL THAT, KIDDIES. AIN'T GONNA HAPPEN.
UNLESS I'M STUPID ENOUGH TO WAIT OUT THE COLLARS ...
THREE MINUS TWO EQUALS ME. HOW'S THAT?


!!
THE GAME..
.....

IT TOOK KEIKO FROM YOU... AND NOW IT'S TAKING YOU FROM US!
AND KEIKO... I HEARD... SAW YOUR PAIN. MAYBE YOU CAN TALK YOURSELF INTO BELIEVING YOU DIDN'T CARE... NOT ME, KAWADA. NOT ME!
IT'S THE GAME, YOU SEE... I UNDER-STAND THAT NOW.
.....
YOU CARED.
KEIKO WAS... YEAH. SHE WAS SOMEONE I...
NICE TRY.
.....

NICE LEGS, SWEET RACK. SURE, HER FACE COULD HAVE USED A BIT OF WORK...BUT I'VE FUCKED UGLIER.
SHE'S THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY.
NEWS FLASH--OZ IS A SLUM, THE WHITE KNIGHT'S A RETARD AND THE SEVEN DWARVES GANG RAPE PIXIES.
.....
OH-- AND ALL OF YOUR FRIENDS ARE DEAD, YOU AND POLLYANNA IN PANTS HERE ARE ABOUT TO JOIN THEM, AND I COULD GIVE A FLYING FUCK. REALITY 101.
THE COLLARS, NORI! WHAT ABOUT THE COLLARS, F'CHRISSAKE! TWENTY-FOUR HOURS TICK BY WITH NO ONE DEAD AND BOOM! WHAT? I'M SUPPOSED TO DIE BECAUSE YOU HAD FAITH?!
!!

THE BIRD CALL... YOU KEPT IT BECAUSE OF HER... YOU KEPT IT BECAUSE YOU CARED! WHY WOULD YOU KEEP IT IF YOU REALLY DIDN'T CARE?!
.....
AH
DIRECTION. SOMETHING TO DRAW YOUR ATTENTION.
THE LIE GOES DOWN SMOOTHER WHEN YOUR EYES AREN'T THE PRIMARY FOCUS.
LOOK OUT FOR NUMBER ONE
PEOPLE ARE THERE TO BE USED WHO WAS IT SAID, "THERE'S A SUCKER BORN EVERY MINUTE?"
?!

SON OF A BITCH! YOU...
NO!!
BUT LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU GUYS? WOULDN'T BEEN PUBLICITY PUSH WE'VE GOT
SON
YOU COULD MAKE SOME KIND OF STATEMENT ABOUT THE
BUT YOU KNOW WHAT? I MEAN A PITY THAT
I MIGHT WHEN I SAID YOU TWO WERE MADE FOR EACH OTHER WELL, MAYBE NOT IN THOSE EXACT WORDS
IF IT MEANS ANYTHING

MOST PEOPLE GO THEIR WHOLE LIVES AND NEVER FIND THE RIGHT PERSON. MOST PEOPLE SETTLE.
DON'T, SHU TIME FOR STUPID'S OVER.
.....
NO NEED FOR THIS TO GO DOWN MESSY. ATTA BOY...
BUT YOU TWO YOU'RE VICTIMS OF BAD TIMING. I ALMOST FEEL FOR YOU ALMOST AT LEAST YOU TWO GOT A TASTE.

JUST LOOK AT THE TWO OF YOU...
HUH...
.....
YOU STILL DON'T QUITE BELIEVE
SEE THOSE TWINKLING LIGHTS OUT THERE? HOW MANY DO YOU FIGURE ARE TUNED IN TO THE PROGRAM RIGHT NOW?
YOU KNEW THE RULES OF THE GAME... BUT YOU'RE STILL SURPRISED WHEN IT COMES TO THIS. YOU BOTH HAVE A LOOK SIMILAR TO WHEN YOU FIND OUT A HOOKER'S PACKING TUBE STEAK
HOW MUCH MONEY'S CHANGED HANDS AS BETS PAY OFF? HOW MANY PEOPLE'LL BENEFIT WHEN I PULL THIS TRIGGER?
.....
SHOULD'A PLAYED HARD, SHII..
ODDS ON YOU WINNING WOULD'VE MADE PEOPLE RICH.

SHE DESERVES THAT MUCH.
KISS HER, SHU...
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?!
DO IT, THEN!!
.....
NO? HAVE IT YOUR WAY. ENDGAME, SHU.

KA-BLAAM

AS LAST WORDS GO... NOT TOO SHABBY.

BANG!!
TFT
TFT
SIR THE KILLS ARE CONFIRMED NAKAHARA AND NAKAGAWA
.....

AND SO IT ENDS WELL PLAYED, KAWADA BEAR WITH ME A MOMENT, WON'T YOU?
LET THIS SERVE AS OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION THAT SHIRO IBA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 9 / CLASS B HAVE SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED THIS YEAR'S PROGRAM THAT'S A WRAP
SORRY ABOUT THAT, BUT THERE ARE CERTAIN FORMALITIES THAT MUST BE SEEN TO... BUT THEN YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT, DON'T YOU?

THE RESTRICTED AREAS HAVE BEEN NEUTRALIZED YOU CAN F NO YOUR WAY HERE, YES?
THAT'S A TWO-PEAT FOR YOU, KAWADA THE DVD COLLECTION WILL SELL THROUGH THE ROOF!

PROGRAM CONCLUSION
CONFIRMED
05/14/2637: KAGAWA
NAT'L JUNIOR HIGH
SCHOOL GRADE 3
CLASS 11

TERMINATING FEED...
!!
SHOGO KAWADA...!
TERMINATED.

YEAH, YEAH FILE IT UNDER "DEJA VU"
HMP
MASTERFUL. TRULY MASTERFUL I LAUGHED I CRIED
WELL DONE AGAIN!
GOT A SMOKE? I RAN OUT AFTER OFFING THE FINAL TWO
AND NONE OF THAT GOVERNMENT ISSUED NICOTINE-FREE CRAP
A TWO-TIME CHAMP SHOULD AT LEAST BE WORTH A NAME BRAND
NINTH GRADE / CLASS B: BOY #5 SHOGO KAWADA

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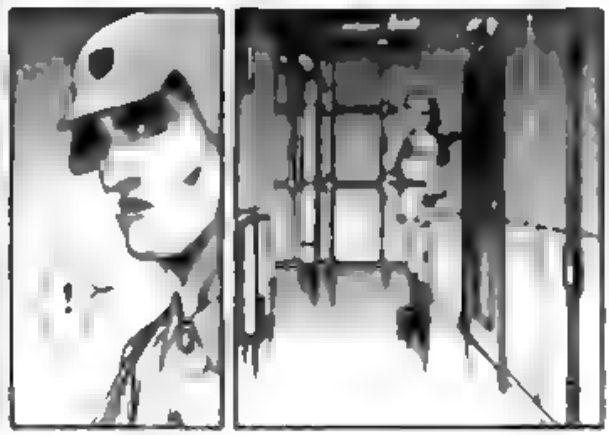
CHAPTER 117: Inference



CHAPTER 117: Inference

I TRUST YOUR NEEDS ARE BEING SEEN TO? YOU ONLY HAVE TO ASK, YOU KNOW.
WINNER AND STILL CHAMPION ...
大東
OOH. MUY MA-CHO!
AND SAVE THE PRAISE, CHIEF COMING FROM YOU, IT FEELS LIKE BEING GIVEN A HAND JOB...
I "NEED" YOU TO PISS OFF
WITH A CHAIN MAIL GLOVE
.....

IT'S AS GOOD A PLACE TO START AS ANY.
... THIS.
I HATE LOOSE ENDS. DON'T YOU HATE LOOSE ENDS? I MOST CERTAINLY DO. WHICH BRINGS US TO...
HUH...
AND HERE I AM TURNING A BLIND EYE TO UNDERAGE SMOKING. I'D TELL YOU THEY'LL STUNT YOUR GROWTH, BUT...
PERVERTS WILL BE PERVERTS. YOU CAN GO NOW.
HUH. BIG SURPRISE THERE.
.....
YES INDEED
SATELLITE IMAGING A NEW INNOVATION. IT CAME IN ESPECIALLY HANDY WHEN THE SOUMA GIRL WAS PUTTING ON HER TAWDRY LITTLE PEEPSHOWS.
YES
.....
THERE A POINT TO THIS?
.....
WHAT CAN I TELL YOU? THEY TOLD ME LIGHTNING NEVER STRIKES TWICE--AND I BELIEVED THEM!
THAT'S A PRETTY STEEP BET FOR A GUY IN MY WAGE BRACKET.
YES...
YOU KNOW, I HAD 20,000 ON KIRIYAMA TO WIN. NO OFFENSE... BUT YOU COST ME DEARLY.

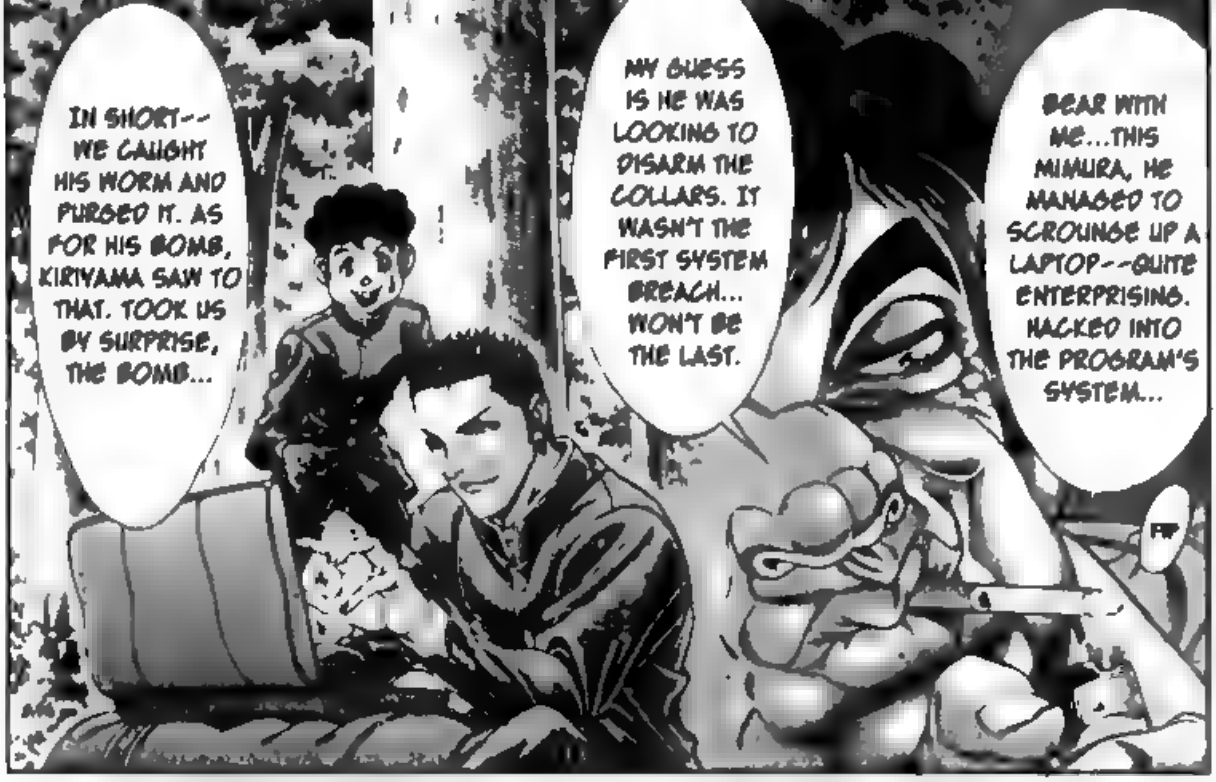
……
!
NO NECK RASH?
SO …
NASTY THINGS, THOSE COLLARS
?!
大東亜共和
歳
……
PFF.
YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE THE DIFFICULTIES WE HAD DUBBING THE FOOTAGE BEFORE WE FIGURED OUT HOW TO MIC THE COLLARS.
IMPENDING DEATH AND ALL THAT YES DEFINITELY NASTY BUT USEFUL? YOU HAVE NO IDEA.
MOVES THE SHOW ALONG BRISKLY…
BUT A NECESSARY EVIL. TELLS US WHERE YOU ARE, WHO YOU'RE WITH.
THE THINGS WE HEAR…
……
MINIATURIZATION. SCIENCE MARCHES ON, EH?
募集中!!
募集中!!
……
..RIGHT ABOUT HERE

.....
AND STILL, MISTAKES WERE MADE.
YES ...
...BY THINKING I GIVE A DAMN.
YEAH? YOU JUST MADE ONE ..
SHOCK ME? SURPRISE ME? THE PROGRAM'S BROADCAST! HOW FUCKING STUPID DO YOU THINK WE ARE?!
SO THE COLLARS WERE WIRED FOR SOUND. AND THIS IS SUPPOSED TO...WHAT?
MMM...
YES.
YOU ARE THE COLD-BLOODED ONE..
YOU MAKING A PASS AT ME?
HUH.
!!
YOU YOUNG PEOPLE, SO QUICK TO TAKE OFFENSE.
NO, NO, NO...
WHAT? STUPID?
SO PASSION-ATE!

WHAT OF IT?
ABOUT YOUR PERFORMANCE WITH HANAMARA AND THE GUFF
NOTE AN AWKWARD COMPLIMENT
A BIT MUCH, NO?
STEPCARED IT OUT A WEE BIT TOO LONG.
ALL THAT MELODRAMA... MOST UNLIKE YOU. I'D HAVE THOUGHT YOU'D POP THE TWO OF THEM AFTER THEY TOOK DOWN KIRIYAMA FOR YOU.
PATH OF LEAST RESIST-ANCE AND ALL...
WHATEVER POSSESSED YOU TO PLAY IT OUT LIKE THAT, HMM...?

I DID WHAT I DID BECAUSE I DAMN WELL WANTED TO! I GAVE YOU YOUR FUCKING MONEY SHOT!
YOU HEARD EVERY FUCKING WORD. MINIATURIZATION, REMEMBER?
NOW TELL ME IT WON'T MAKE THE HIGHLIGHT REEL...
?!
AH! AS IF ON CUE.
YES.
THAT WOULD BE THE HELICOPTER
.....

ALMOST MANAGED TO SNEAK ONE IN UNDER THE RADAR. BUILT A BOMB, OF ALL THINGS. A BOMB!
HMM.. SPEAKING OF PERFORM-ANCES... GOODNESS GRACIOUS, THE MIMURA BOY!
QUITE THE SHOW-STOPPER, THAT ONE.
THE COLLARS! RIGHT. AND YOUR, OH SO, MELO-DRAMATIC PERFOR-MANCE.
SO! WHERE WERE WE?
NOW WHAT WOULD A MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT KNOW OF BOMBS.?
HIS UNCLE WAS A "TOLERATED" DISSIDENT DID YOU KNOW THAT?
KEPT THE WRONG COMPANY'S WHAT I'M THINKING.
DON'T KNOW, DON'T CARE.
I'M SORRY... AM I BORING YOU?
BLOOD WILL TELL.
!!


IN SHORT-- WE CAUGHT HIS WORM AND PURGED IT. AS FOR HIS BOMB, KIRIYAMA SAW TO THAT. TOOK US BY SURPRISE, THE BOMB...
MY GUESS IS HE WAS LOOKING TO DISARM THE COLLARS. IT WASN'T THE FIRST SYSTEM BREACH... WON'T BE THE LAST.
BEAR WITH ME...THIS MIMURA, HE MANAGED TO SCROUNGE UP A LAPTOP--QUITE ENTERPRISING. HACKED INTO THE PROGRAM'S SYSTEM...
FFF

.....
I ACTUALLY GOT SO ANGRY THAT I PUT OUT A WARRANT ON A MAN WE'D ALREADY .. RENDERED THREAT NEUTRAL.
I SO DETEST SURPRISES.

.....
YES...
SO MUCH ATTENTION FOCUSED ON MIMURA'S WORM..

LIKE I SAID MISTAKES WERE MADE
I'M OF COURSE REFERRING TO THE UNCLE. YOU HAVE NO IDEA MY EMBARRASS-MENT OVER THAT ONE

.....

A LUDDITE AND PROUD. HOW DELIGHTFULLY BOHEMIAN YES INDEED
KEEPING IT REAL. OF COURSE
I WOULDN'T KNOW A WORM FROM A MOLE'S ASSHOLE.
WHY TELL ME ALL THIS?
SO?
INTERNET DIDN'T QUITE REACH THE SHITHOLE I GREW UP IN. "WWW ARMPITOFTHE FUCKINGWORLD. COM."
YOU GOT MY FILE, SO YOU KNOW.
.....
.....
SECURITY CODES, CLASSIFIED FILES, POLICE, MILITARY ALL STANDARD DISSIDENT M.O.
THE HACKER TARGETED THE USUAL.
TOO CLUMSY, IN FACT.
BEFORE MIMURA, THERE WAS A SYSTEM BREACH ABOUT SIX MONTHS BACK. VERY CLUMSY.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT I FOUND?
HAD YOU LOT BEEN MORE AGGRESSIVE, I MIGHT NEVER HAVE FOUND THE TIME.
I TOOK IT UPON MYSELF TO INVESTIGATE DURING ONE OF THE LAG TIMES.
REVEALED A HIDDEN TRAPDOOR... VERY CLEVER...
IRONICALLY, IT WAS MIMURA'S WORM THAT POINTED THE WAY.

INDULGE AN OLD FOOL.
HUH...
AND WHILE I'M AT IT, LET ME REITERATE I. DON'T. CARE.
LET ME GUESS. PORN?
AS NEAR AS I COULD TELL, NOTHING HAD BEEN ALTERED. EVEN STRANGER THAN THAT...
..WHY WOULDN'T SAID DISSIDENT PURGE THE SPECS?
BETTER STILL, ONCE FOUND...
NOW WHY WOULD A DISSIDENT WANT THAT?
SOMEONE HAD BEEN PEEKING AT THE COLLAR SPECS. GATAL CANAL #22 ELECTRONIC RESTRAINT COLLAR.
. NOTHING HAD BEEN DOWNLOADED FROM THE SITE.
MOTIVE, MOTIVE, MOTIVE... WHO COULD POSSIBLY CARE ABOUT THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM COLLARS?
AND IF WE DO THAT, MIMURA AND UNCLE DEAREST . GONE AS WELL.
MEMORIZING, PERHAPS? NOW WHY WOULD A DISSIDENT DO THAT...OR EVEN CARE, FOR THAT MATTER? I THINK WE CAN REMOVE "DISSIDENT" FROM THE EQUATION, NO?
JUST VISITING, PERHAPS? HMM...?
WE'VE METHODS. WE CAN TELL. NOW I ASK YOU, MY LUDDITE FRIEND-- WHY KEEP A TRAPDOOR OPEN IF YOU'RE NOT GOING TO REMOVE ITEMS THROUGH IT?

THAT NARROWS DOWN THE LIST OF SUSPECTS DRAMATIC-ALLY
SOMEONE OBSESSED! HAS TO BE! AND WHO MORE OBSESSED THAN ONE WHO HAS WORN THE COLLAR? EH? EH? AM I GOOD, OR AM I GOOD? HA!
ONLY YOU AREN'T A BASKET CASE.
OF ALL THE WINNERS
PROCESS OF ELIMINATION, DEAR BOY. TAO YOU'RE IT.
METHINKS THE "LUDDITE" DOTH PROTEST TOO MUCH THE COLLARS AND I'M SURE YOU ALREADY KNOW THIS.

...REACT TO REMOVAL THE SAME AS TO DEATH. CESSATION OF DISCERNIBLE LIFE SIGNS. OR WOULD, IF ONE KNEW HOW TO REMOVE THE COLLAR WITHOUT TRIGGERING IT...
PERHAPS A DISGRUNTLED INDIVIDUAL WHO'D MEMORIZED THE SPECS OVER AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME, EH?
.....
WHAT? YOU THINK I HACKED THE COLLAR SPECS--THEN DELIBERATELY GOT MYSELF SENT HERE JUST TO PROVE A POINT?!
THERE'S NO WAY I COULD HAVE KNOWN WHICH CLASS WAS NEXT! REALITY CHECK, OLD MAN!
.....
FINE I'LL PLAY ALONG. WHY WOULD I BOTHER--UNLESS I KNEW I'D BE BACK?
SUBTLE-TIES...

I'M SURE YOU'D HAVE CONTINUED DIGGING INTO THE PROGRAM'S WORKINGS ...
HUH... SUCH CLARITY. YOU SEE?
YOU WERE FISHING ...
YOU BELIEVE THE PROGRAM WRONGED YOU. YOU ARE NOTHING IF NOT VINDICTIVE.
FATE DOES, IT WOULD SEEM, HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR-- AND IT SKEWS DARK.
JUST LOOK AT THAT RESOLUTION! MINURA, SETO AND IIJIMA IDENTIFIABLE BY SIGHT.
YES.
HAD CIRCUMSTANCE NOT LANDED YOU HERE, I'M SURE YOU'D HAVE CONTINUED INDULGING YOUR OBSESSION..
YOU DO HAVE. PROGRAM ISSUES.
STEP ONE IN A SERIES?
?!
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS! I MEAN, WHAT WERE THE ODDS?
SO . YOU'RE SAYING I STOLE THESE COLLAR SPECS ON THE OFF-SHOT I WOUND UP HERE AGAIN?
TPP

RECOGNIZE THIS ONE? IT'S WHERE YOU POPPED THE STAR-CROSSED LOVERS.
METICULOUS AS EVER, KANADA. AND YOU ARE NOTHING IF NOT METICULOUS.
STEP ONE IN A SERIES DESIGNED TO UNDERMINE THE PROGRAM? MMM? AND THIS? STEP TWO?
STEP ONE: GIVE SECRETS AWAY?
STEP TWO: FIND SECRETS TO KEEP? IS THAT IT?
SO MANY TREES.. SO DARK HARDLY A FITTING CLIMAX, EH?
IT LACKS. CLOSURE
ROBBING SO MANY OF YOUR HISTORY-MAKING TRIUMPHANT MOMENT
HARDLY FAIR, IS IT?

HERE...
...IN THE DARK.
WE HEARD IT ALL...YES WE DID. HEARD IT ALL LOUD AND CLEAR. CLEAR'S A BELL...
SO..
..WHY DID YOU DRAW IT OUT?
THE SPONSORS ARE PITCHING FITS...
.....

WAITING 'TIL THE COAST IS CLEAR TO MAKE THEIR GETAWAY NOW ROMANTIC
HOW FAR DO YOU SUPPOSE THEY'LL GET CHOKING ON THEIR OWN VOMIT? AN UNFORTUNATE SIDE EFFECT OF THE TOXIN BEING SPRAYED THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THE ISLAND AS WE SPEAK.
THEY'RE STILL ON THE ISLAND. HIDING.
NOT DEAD, KAWADA. WELL, NOT YET. WELL STAGED, YES...BUT SADLY LACKING IN AUTHENTICITY. NOT AS METICULOUS AS YOU THOUGHT, ARE YOU?
THEN...A MINUTE AND A HALF LATER... YOU STEP FROM THE SHADOWS. WHAT WERE YOU WITHHOLDING FROM THE AUDIENCE?
BANG! THERE GOES MR. NANAHARA. THEN, FIFTY SECONDS LATER-- BANG! MISS NAKAGAWA. QUITE THE SPACE OF TIME.
DID YOU TOY WITH THEM? MAKE IT LAST? PERHAPS RAPE THE GIRL?
NO...NOT ENOUGH TIME. NO SCREAMS NOR TEARS THAT WE COULD MAKE OUT... NO FUN FOR SHOGO?
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO TIME IT NOW?
THEY'RE DEAD. WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT?
NINE BY TEN GLOSSIES OF THE FUCKING BODIES?
WHAT SAY WE PUT OUR CARDS ON THE TABLE, EH?
HM...
THE TRAGIC, STAR-CROSSED LOVERS ...?

IN THE PAST, SOME WE THOUGHT DEAD. WELL, WEREN'T
IT'S A RECENT ADDITION, YOU SEE . . .
AWKWARD, THAT.
THIS CUTS DOWN ON ANY...MOIST SURPRISES.

WHAT THE HELL DO I CARE...?
SNRK
'S ONLY ME LEFT
WINNER AND STILL CHAMPION
FUCK YOU
PRICELESS! CAUGHT RED-HANDED AND STILL STICKS TO IT ALL LIKE GLUE! PRICE-LESS!
HEE HEE HEE HEE!!
I'M SURE.
A PITY, REALLY, KAWADA...

ALL OF THOSE LOVELY BOYS AND GIRLS DEAD. AND FOR WHAT?
ABSO-FUCKING-LUTELY NOTHING. BREAKS ONE'S HEART JUST THINKING ABOUT SUCH A TRAGIC WASTE OF YOUNG LIVES...
GO ON!! DO IT!!

ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, YOU DID MANAGE TO STRIKE A BLOW AGAINST THE PROGRAM. THANKS TO THIS LITTLE DEBACLE, THIS YEAR'S PROGRAM'S BEEN RENDERED NULL AND VOID.
!!
YOU HAD SUCH PROMISE.

DO IT, MOTHER-FUCKER! DO IT!!

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CHAPTER 118: Counterattack
BUT I DIDN'T...
SNORT

CHAPTER 118: Counterattack

東亜
和国万歳
HH
H-
HEY!
I'M
HIT!!
ING-
GAH!!
.....
HIT!!
GODINHEAVEN!!
I'M HIT!!

大東亜共和国
?!
B-BOY?
!!
WHO YOU MEE
TSHK

SIR! WE'RE UNDER ATTA--
!!
S- SIR..?

ズズ
ズズ
ズズ

WE ARE EXPERIENCING TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES. PLEASE STAND BY...
.....
ON SECOND THOUGHT... FUCK OFF, THE LOT OF YOU.
NO- OHH!
NUH- UH... LATER FOR P- PAIN.
.....

!!
WE DID IT! WE--
KANADA! ALL RIGHT!!
SO ..HOW MANY YOU RACK UP TOPSIDE?
.....
.....
!!

DIDN'T KILL THEM. WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED?

OLD HABITS DIE HARD?

!
YOU!
YOU MUST BE THE NEW-HEY!
HEH. NEVER CHANGE, SHU.
.....
YOUR BOSS FIGURED IT OUT. I DECLARED WAR ON THE PROGRAM.
.....
GOT WHAT I WANTED RIGHT HERE.
ANYTHING YOU WANTED WAS YOURS FOR THE ASKING! SO WHY?!
HE HAD IT ALL WORKED OUT, EXCEPT FOR THESE TWO.
SO I LET YOU HEAR WHAT I WANTED YOU TO HEAR AND SEE WHAT I WANTED YOU TO SEE
NOT A SOUND!
?
0

THE CON WAS IN.....
NOT A SOUND!
HAD ME A LITTLE MEMO READY THAT SPELLED OUT WHAT WE HAD TO DO NEXT. NO OPTIONS

WELL--I ALMOST CONVINCED MYSELF DRAMA WAS NO FIGURE
BABY ENOUGH TO TEAM UP WITH AND ACT THE PART. FIGURE THE AMERICANS MIGHT SLIDE ME AN EXTRA FOR THE PERFORMANCE?
OH, PVT. THE COLLAR WORKS PRETTY ALL I HACKED AND WE WORKED I MADE IT A POINT TO FIND OUT HIGH SCHOOL YOU FUCKERS HAD TARGETED ME!!
HAD ME THIS WELL, THE WEAVE-- AND NOW THE ALLEYS I NEEDED
NEVER OCCURRED TO YOU THAT ANYONE'D BRING IT BACK TO YOU, DID IT?
YOU BOYS PLAYED A PRETTY CRUCIAL ROLE IN ALL THIS.

WHY CLIMB WHEN YOU CAN JUMP THIS IS WHERE YOU GUYS COME IN...
LOOK YOU RAISED A GOOD BIT MORE THAN THE ANCIENT THIS TIME...

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, IT SHOULDN'T HAVE WORKED
FROM THEN ON IT WAS LAY LOW AND WAIT FOR THE RIGHT MOMENT
I MEAN, I WAS PLANNING TO GO IN A SOLO ACT-- BUT WOUND UP PART OF A BAND. WE WERE FLYING BY THE SEAT OF OUR PANTS.
COMPLICATES THINGS, SHILL. DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES. IT'S SIGH.
WHY DO I BOTHER?
I MEAN. WE DID IT WITHOUT KILLING THEM THAT'S GOT TO COUNT FOR SOMETHING
THEY AH
I'D HAVE SHOT TO KILL...
JUST BE GLAD IT WAS SHILL.
AND LOVED IT.

STILL GOT TO MAKE THE MAINLAND AND FIGURE A WAY OUT OF THE COUNTRY. YOU GUYS STILL SET ON THE U.S.?
WE BEAT THEM AT THEIR OWN GAME! WE BEAT THE PROGRAM!
WE DID IT! I CAN'T BELIEVE WE DID IT!
BUT IT'S NOT OVER YET
SURE DID
JUST WAIT 'TIL THE NIGHTMARE'S ELSE IN
YEAH
IT'S JUST HARD TO BELIEVE IT'S REALLY OVER Y'KNOW?
YEAH... THE U.S.... IT'S...
!!

SEE IF I LET YOU LIVE!!
PUSH ASS PUCK ER!!

YOURSELF A ONE-WAY TICKET TO WHATEVER
MY HAND! MY FUCKING HAND! SHIT! FUCK!!
AAAAHH AHHH
DON'T SHOOT, KARADA
KARADA DON'T!

A PARTING GIFT FROM KIRIYAMA. INSURANCE. GUESS IT PAID THE RIGHT DIVIDEND, EH?
.....
KEVLAR VEST, BOYS AND GIRLS. NEVER STORM A MILITARY COMPOUND WITHOUT IT.
.....
GET OVER YOURSELF, SHOGO. SHE FLAT OUT REFUSED. WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO DO?
WRESTLE HER TO THE GROUND AND FORCE HER INTO IT?
AND SPEAKING OF FORCING PEOPLE INTO THINGS...
NICE MOVE.
NICE MOVE, SHU. I'D HAVE MADE NORIKO WEAR IT, BUT

HERE.
MANUAL PILOT'S A LOT EASIER THAN TRYING TO PROGRAM AUTO
HUH?
OH SURE
?
?
LET ME SHOW YOU HOW TO RUN THIS RUST BUCKET
HANG ON, HANG ON. MY BAD COME WITH ME FIRST
KEEP IT LINED UP AND STEADY
YOU TAKE YOUR DIRECTION READS OFF OF THIS
GYRO COMPASS EASY READ
YAH OVER HERE
GOT TO THINK AHEAD MOMENTUM PLAYS A BIG PART SO EASY NOT JOGGING, YAH?
KEEP IN MIND THERE'S NO STOPPING ON A DIME HERE THIS AIN'T NO CAR---SO GO EASY
GOT YOUR ACCELERATION HERE GO EASY THESE THINGS PICK UP SPEED PUSH FOR POWER BRAKE'S HERE
HATE TO BREAK THIS TO YOU, BUT I GET LOST IN THE BATHTUB.
YOU'RE REALLY GOING TO TRUST ME TO DRIVE THIS THING?
YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?
WHEN YOU REACH THE MAINLAND THEY'LL KNOW WHAT TO DO - LEAD WITH MY NAME.
THE ADDRESS AT THE BOTTOM G-GO THERE
STILL GOT MY LITTLE "MEMO" ? TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT
YOU STILL GOT THE NOTE, RIGHT?
HUH

AND ME.. HUH..
'CEPT FOR YOU TWO COMING ALONG...
YEAH— ALL WORKED OUT.
ポタッ..
HEY YOU OKAY ..?
MAN...
YOU REALLY HAD THIS WORKED OUT.
SHIT, KAWADA. JUST INTRODUCE US WHEN WE GET THERE
WORKED IT ALL OUT, TOO..
WE B-BEAT THEM, SHU.. NORI.. I GOT THAT PART RIGHT JUST NEVER CONSIDERED I MIGHT NOT BE AROUND TO S-SAVOR THE VICTORY...
BLP
I WAS REVISING ON THE FLY, WORKING YOU TWO INTO MY VENDETTA, TRYING TO K-KEEP YOU ALIVE...
I KNEW WHAT NEEDED DOING... H-HAD THE MEANS AND THE WILL... BUT THEN YOU TWO SHOW UP...
B-BEST LAID P-PLANS
ドクッ
ドクッ
?!
?
OH... CRAP

I C-CAN'T EVEN T-TELL YOU WHEN IT HAD HAPPENED
H-HOW'S DAT FOR P-PAYING ATTENTION? DON'T EH-KNOW WHEN BUT IT'S L-LONG OVER DUE
HA HA

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CHAPTER 119: Hope

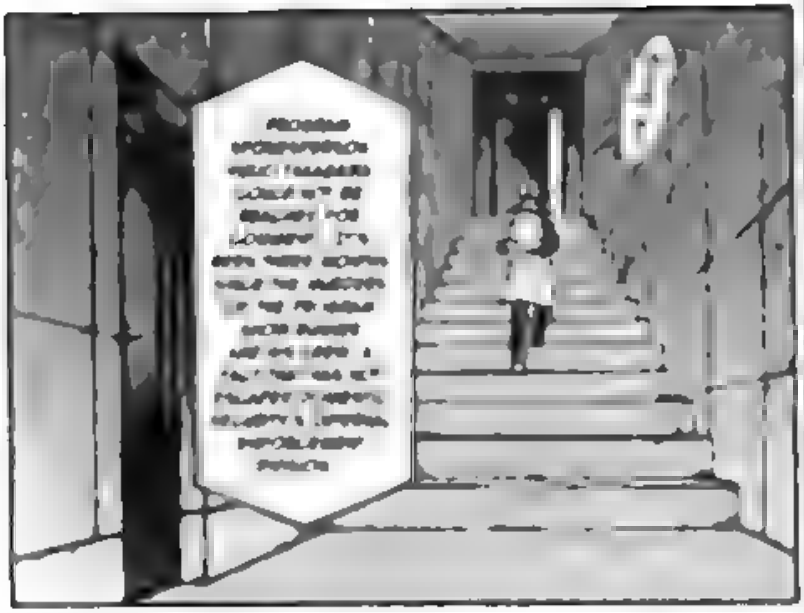
NO WAY! NO FUCKING WAY! YOU HANG ON!! YOU STAY WITH US, GODDAMMIT!!
SHU...
T-TIRED, SHU...
NO
YOU'RE THE DOCTOR'S KID! TELL ME WHAT TO DO! TELL ME!!
.....
TELL ME WHAT TO DO!! SHOGO!!
TELL ME!
S-SAME'S...IT'S EVER B-BEEN, SHU... PROTECT NORI. . ALWAYS PROTECT. N...NORI...
HKK...
DOCTOR'S KID KN-KNOWS WHEN IT'S A L-LOST C-CAUSE...
T-TOO LATE, SHU... T-TORN UP INSIDE...
PLEASE...
SHOGO...

ONE GOOD THING CAME OUT OF THE PUGILIST GAME IN SPITE OF IT
ONE GOOD THING PUGILIST GAME
FLIES IN THE F-FACE OF EVERYTHING THE GAME'S ABOUT
F-FACERS COULDN'T DO A TH- THING ABOUT IT
LOVE'S GOT NO F-FACE IN IT SHEESH YOU TWO NEVER GOT THE M-MEMO YOU TWO TOOK A PIECE MADE THAT PIECE'A THE GAME ABOUT LOVE GO F-FIGHTS
SEE YOU 'N' NOW, SHU GAME'S ABOUT REAL RAGE I EN-ENJOY
RE- MEM- BER
BASH ON THE SPEED

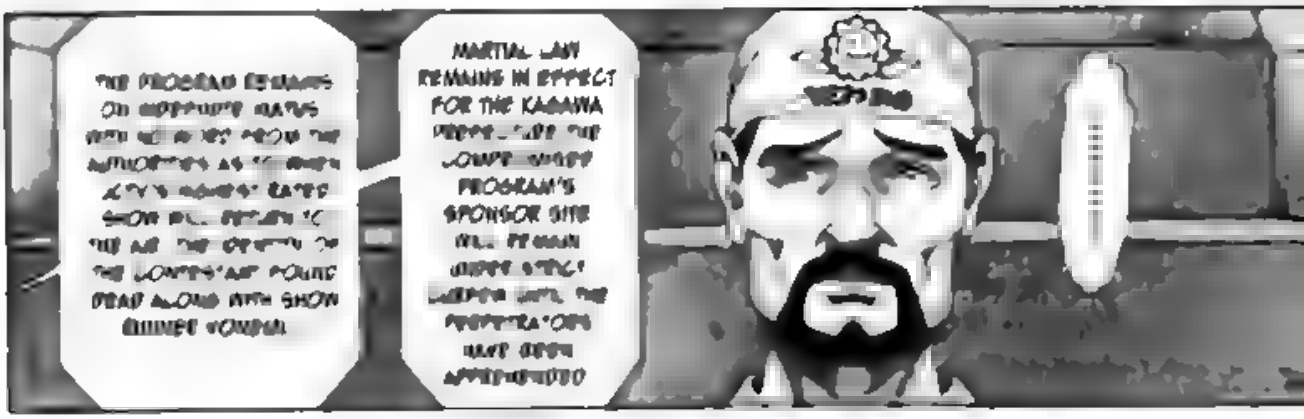
I'M. I'M GLAD I WAS HERE TO S-SEE IT I'M GLAD I COULD P-PLAY MY PART STOP IT FROM REACHING KILL OR BE KILLED
I WANTED TO B- BRING THE SAME DOWN P-FROM WITHIN YOU TWO MAY HAVE D-DONE THE MOST D-DAMAGE BY JUST BEING YOURSELVES
HM. YOU TWO'D PROBABLY HAVE WAITED OUT THE COLLAPS
YOU TWO
THEY DON'T EN-KNOW YET, SHU
SHAME ON Y-YOU B-BAD FOR EATING
JUST FOL- -LOW GOD- -DAMN BIRD CALL
DUMB ASS BIRD CALL HEAR IT? I GOTTA GOTTA GO TO HER GOTTA TELL HER
I I GOTTA G-GO NOW
STAY SMART
WHAT WE DID THAT WON'T LAST

YOU DO RIGHT... BOTH OF YOU...
COMING...
THERE... SEE? SHE'S SMILING...

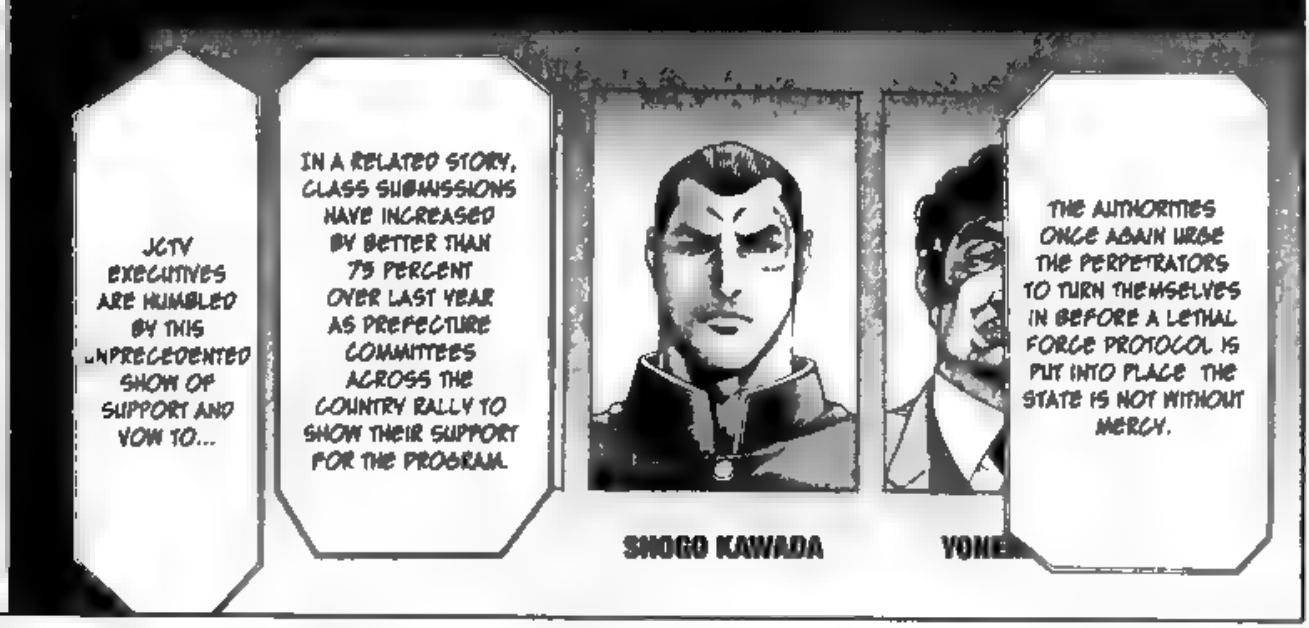
THERE YOU GO. HAVE A NICE DAY.
COME AGAIN
I'M ON IT.
MIND THE COUNTER I'M CATCHING A BREAK. YOU KNOW THE DRILL
.....



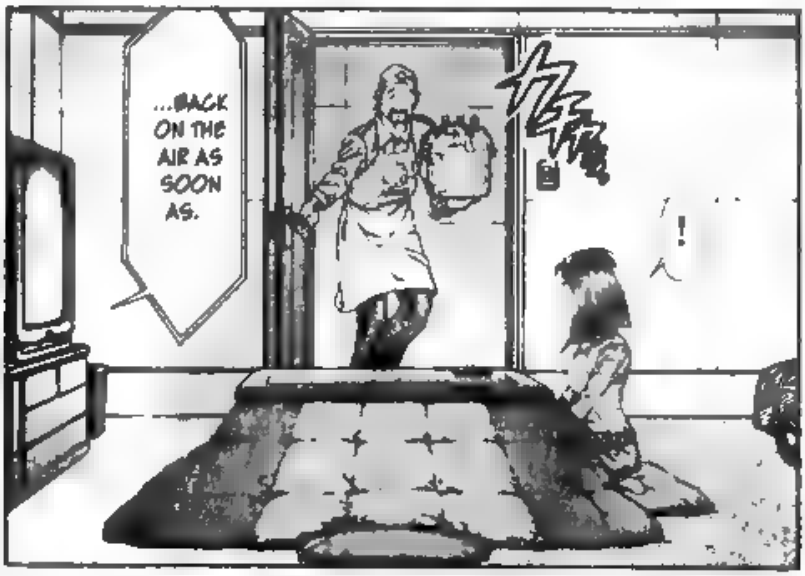
BEEP


THE PROGRAM REMAINS ON HIATUS UNTIL WE HEAR FROM THE AUTHORITIES AS TO WHEN LIFE'S HARSH REALITIES SHOW IN THEIR EFFECTS ON THE AIR. THE OFFICES OF THE LOVERS' AID POINT DEAD ALONG WITH SHOW GUIDE YOKOKA.
MARTIAL LAW REMAINS IN EFFECT FOR THE KABAWA PREFECTURE. THE LOVERS' AID PROGRAM'S SPONSOR SITE WILL REMAIN UNDER STRICT SURVEILLANCE UNTIL THE PERPETRATORS HAVE BEEN APPREHENDED

THE PRIMARY SUSPECTS, SHUDYA NAHAHARA AND NORIKO NAKAGAWA, REMAIN AT LARGE KNOW THEM OR SEE?
NORIKO NAKAGAWA
SHUDYA NAHAHARA
...HAS BEEN REVEALED TO BE SHOGO KABAWA DOMESTIC SECURITY REQUESTS THAT ALL CITIZENS BEARING THE SURNAME "KAWADA" REPORT TO THEIR NEAREST INTERROGATION CENTER. "A CITIZEN DOES AS A CITIZEN MUST."


JCTV EXECUTIVES ARE HUMBLED BY THIS UNPRECEDENTED SHOW OF SUPPORT AND VOW TO...
IN A RELATED STORY, CLASS SUBMISSIONS HAVE INCREASED BY BETTER THAN 75 PERCENT OVER LAST YEAR AS PREFECTURE COMMITTEES ACROSS THE COUNTRY RALLY TO SHOW THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE PROGRAM.
SHOGO KAWADA
THE AUTHORITIES ONCE AGAIN URGE THE PERPETRATORS TO TURN THEMSELVES IN BEFORE A LETHAL FORCE PROTOCOL IS PUT INTO PLACE. THE STATE IS NOT WITHOUT MERCY.

I COME BEARING GIFTS!
MEDIUM WELL, NO GINGER, RIGHT?


...BACK ON THE AIR AS SOON AS.
!

I PACKED ONE FOR YOUR MAN, AS WELL.
SKIN AND BONES, EAT!
NON-SENSE! LOOK AT YOU!
HE CAN EAT IT ON THE BOAT, NO?

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO...! YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE...
OH...

OFF TO AMERICA, EH?
SO.. TONIGHT
HM.

YOU'VE BEEN TOO KIND ! ITADAKIMASU!

I'M SORRY... THIS JUST SMELLS SO GOOD...
HUH?
OH. Y- YES...

SO FRAIL... YET SHE BEAT THE PROGRAM.

!!
SO GOOD ...

OH! RIGHT!

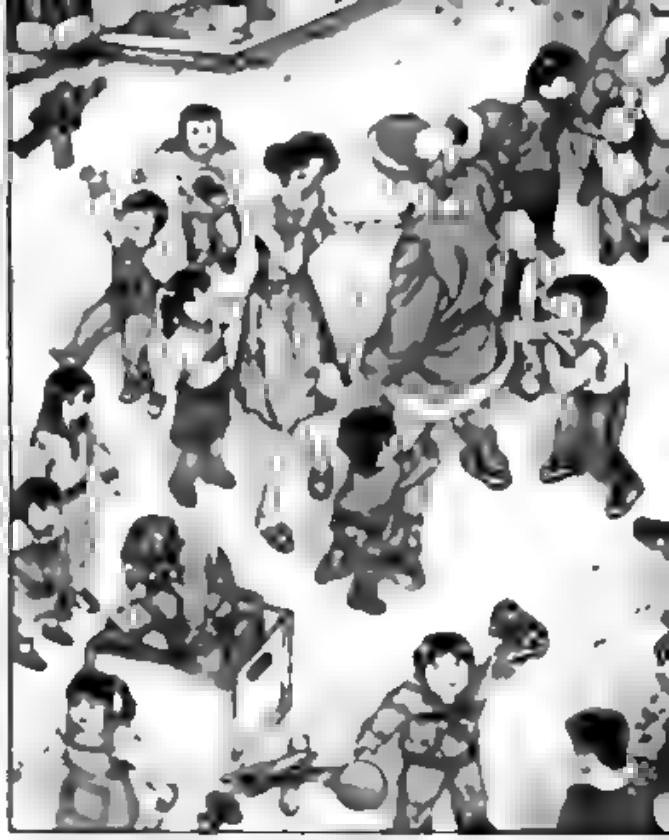
TEARS SCALD. THAT'S A GOOD THING PERHAPS OVER TIME, THEY WILL SCALD LESS..
IT'S NOT GOING TO GO AWAY OVERNIGHT. YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH...

NO, NO..! I UNDER-STAND
I... SOME-TIMES...
I...I'M SORRY IT JUST..

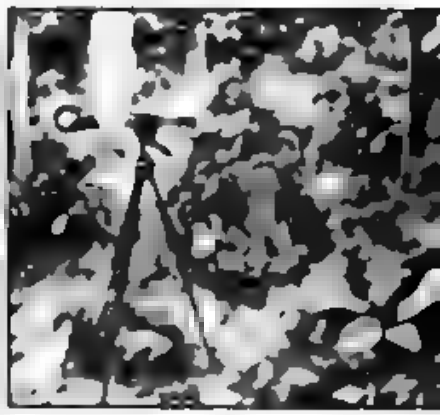
PERHAPS DISTANCE WILL HELP SOFTEN THE MEMORIES. CLOSURE IS NEVER EASY... AND RARELY PLEASANT ...
TONIGHT YOU WILL BE GONE FROM HERE.
.....
.....
!!
NUH

MISS RYOKO SHE'S STILL..
AND EVEN PEOPLE PERSUADED MORE THAN WILLING TO BUILD IT
SO PAY SO WHY PAY
?!
AND STILL YOU STAY
WHAT MEN ?
YOSHITOKI AND I WILL PROTECT YOU!!
NO! MISS RYOKO!
THAT'S WHAT MEN DO

!!
SHK



HELL, ALL RIGHT



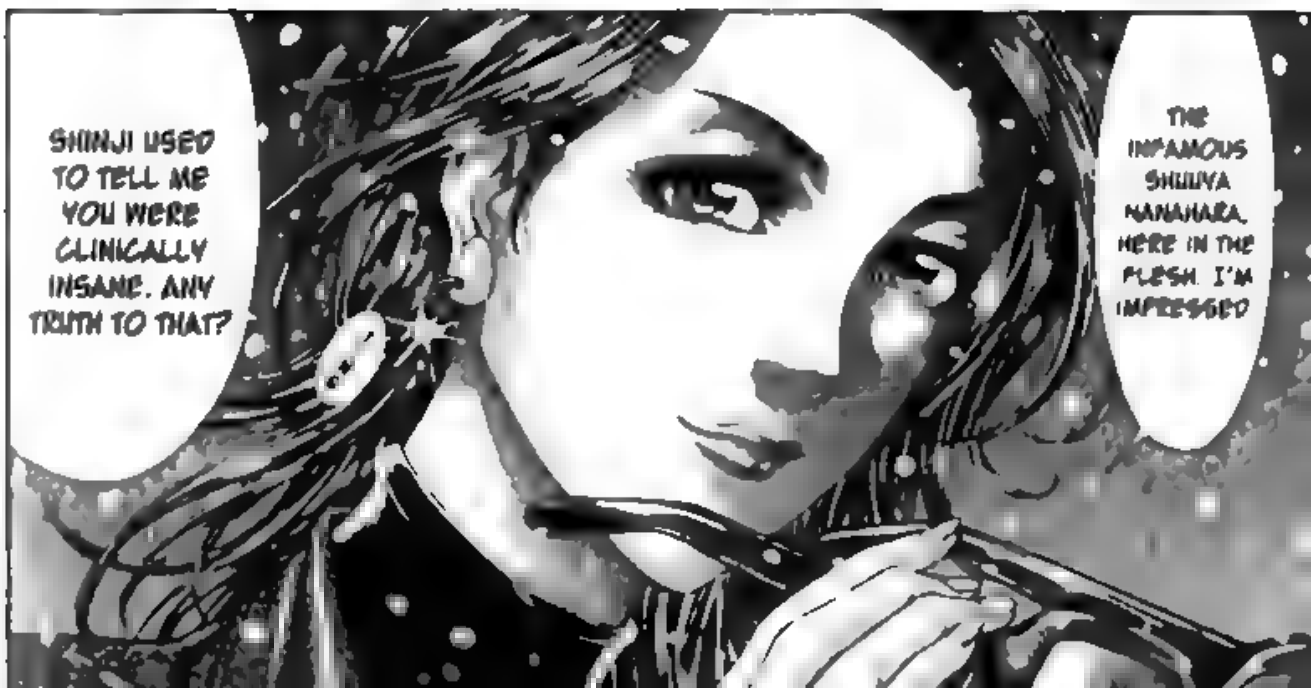
YOU KNOW I CAN'T DO THAT! PLEASE... MOM? I CAN'T!
BUT I...
.....
I
I'M SORRY I KNOW I'M SORRY MOM.
HE'LL COME HOME THEY'LL LET HIM GO AFTER THEY'LL LET HIM GO.
I'M SORRY WE HAVE TO SAY GOODBYE LIKE THIS NO NO, MOM.
YOU BELIEVE WHAT YOU WANT. I KNOW WHAT I BELIEVE.
I'M... I'VE GOT TO GO. I...
.....

YOU OKAY? YOU GET THROUGH TO THEM?

YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE A DAUGHTER, LIKE IT OR... MOM? MOM...?

EVEN IF IT WAS BAD SHE HAD TO
YEAH
BUT SHE HAD TO

ALL SO SHE COULD GET A FACE FULL OF SHIT
WASTE OF A SECURE LINE, IF YOU ASK ME GOVERNMENT'S TRACE SHOULD BE BOUNCING ALL OVER SOUTHEAST ASIA RIGHT ABOUT NOW
FOR ALL THE GOOD IT DID


SHINJI USED TO TELL ME YOU WERE CLINICALLY INSANE. ANY TRUTH TO THAT?
THE INFAMOUS SHIIIYA NANAHARA. HERE IN THE FLESH. I'M IMPRESSED

BUT YOU'RE—
IN THE CAR. LET'S NOT KEEP YOUR RIDE WAITING
A SHOOT FOR ANOTHER DAY
HUH?
MIKURA? YOU KNOW HIM?
HERE'S THE ITINERARY. THERE'S A FISHING VILLAGE ABOUT 50 K FROM HERE. THAT'S WHERE YOU PICK UP A FISHING BOAT THAT'S JUST A SHUTTLE
YOU'LL BE PASSED OFF TO A TRAWLER WELL INTO INTERNATIONAL WATERS. THAT'S YOUR RIDE TO THE STATES
YOU TWO ARE POOR SUBSTITUTES. SORRY MARSH, I KNOW—BUT THIS
THAT MEANS YOU MAKE THIS MORE FOR SHIRO AND EVEN SO THAT DOES ON THAT FISHING ISLAND. YOU MAKE THIS MORE!

QUITE A BOUNTY ON THEM TWO... YAH.
THEY'RE THOSE PROGRAM KIDS, AREN'T THEY?
...WE TOOK ON..
JAPAN? ABOUT THOSE KIDS...
YOU CHECK OUT THE GIRL'S EYES WHEN SHE THINKS NO ONE'S LOOKING? IT'S LIKE LOOKING INTO A BLACK HOLE
SHORT JUMP FROM HER TO MY DAUGHTER... TOO SHORT
ENOUGH TO PUT A MAN ON EASY STREET FOR LIFE
GOOD TO HEAR-- BECAUSE NO WAY DO WE TURN THEM IN.
SIR? I WASN'T TRYING TO...

YOU HAVE TO ASK? ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?
HUH?
SNOOC SAID YOU DO BUT
I'VE NEVER HEARD YOU SAY IT
SURE IT'S . YEAH... OBVIOUS
UM
I JUST REALIZED WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO AMERICA
OH WOW
ONCE I'VE GOT IT WORKED OUT I'LL SHOW YOU, YAY?
I'M STILL WORKING ON IT
I'M ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC, BUT
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU WANT TO DO ONCE WE GET THERE! I MEAN...
I JUST HAVE TO YOU KNOW!
YEAH
YEAH SURE WHENEVER YOU'RE READY

SO UM
WE'RE GOING TO BE OKAY, NORI. YOU'LL SEE.
HELL...WE SURVIVED THE PROGRAM. HOW MUCH WORSE CAN THINGS GET?
.....
'M OKAY
NORI?
WE SURVIVED
YEAH
HI
WE JUST PREEMPTED IT WHILE THEY HUNT FOR US.
WE DIDN'T STOP THE PROGRAM. STILL.
SHE WANTED ME TO TURN MYSELF IN SO THEY'D GIVE MY BROTHER BACK
HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE BEING PERSECUTED BECAUSE WE DID WHAT WE DID?
WE CAN NEVER GO HOME AGAIN WE'RE FUGITIVES MY MOM. MY MOM, SHE PRETTY MUCH DISOWNED ME

NOT MUCH TO GO ON, HUH?
YEAH...

IF IT SHIPS ANYTHING EASILY...
I'M SAD FOR THAT...
...SMALLER SOMEHOW...
ONCE IT'S MADE...
TAKEN IT...
WHAT WE WENT THROUGH... ALL THOSE DEATHS MUST NEVER LOSE SIGNIFICANCE.
LESS SIGNIFICANT.
WE DON'T HAVE MUCH...
LIKE I SAID...

...BUT WHAT WE DO HAVE HAS TO WORK!!

NEVER CHEAPEN THEIR DEATHS BY PUSHING THE MEMORY AWAY...
EVEN THE WORST OF THEM DESERVED BETTER.

NEVER FORGET...

.....
SHUUYA? YOU'RE CRUSHING ME. I CAN'T BREATHE. SHU?
.....
THAT'S BETTER. I WAS ...
YOU REALLY BELIEVE, DON'T YOU? YOU REALLY BELIEVE WE'LL MAKE IT.
OKAY. I CAN BELIEVE, TOO. IT'S NOT LIKE I'VE GOT A CHOICE IN THE MATTER, IS IT?
.....
MAYBE YOU *ARE* CLINICALLY INSANE.
.....

AND IF THAT'S TRUE...
...THEN I MUST BE INSANE, TOO.
BECAUSE I REALLY, TRULY BELIEVE IN YOU.
DO MY EARS REALLY STICK OUT LIKE THAT?
THIS IS ME, RIGHT?

I KNOW YOU LOVE ME...

SO IT'S OKAY. YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY IT. I KNOW.
AND THE NOSE... A BIT WIDE, DON'T YOU THINK? BUT ALL IN ALL, NOT TOO BAD...

I'm writing this down on some stationery I scrounged from the Captain and as soon as I'm done, it's going right overboard.
Catharsis is good. Or so I've heard.

どれだけ強くなれたら　安心できるの？
どれだけ嘘をついたら　信用できるの？
いつまで傷つけ合ったら　仲良くできるの？
どれだけ風が吹いたら　解決できるの？
どれだけ人が死んだら　悲しくなくなるの？
どれだけ子供が飢えたら　何かが出来るの？
その答えは風の中さ　風が知ってるだけさ

Noriko's asleep, thank God for that. I just hope that her dreams give her some kind of escape from the hell of the past few days; the hell that so many of you of couldn't get enough of.

You watch. And as long as you watch, they make more. Just thought you should know.

どれだけ歩けば　大人になれるの？
どれだけ金を払えば　満足できるの？
どれだけミサイルが飛んだら　戦争が終わるの？
いつまで追っかけられたら　静かに眠れるの？
どれだけTVが歌えば　自由になれるの？
いつまでニュースを見てたら　平和な日がくるの？

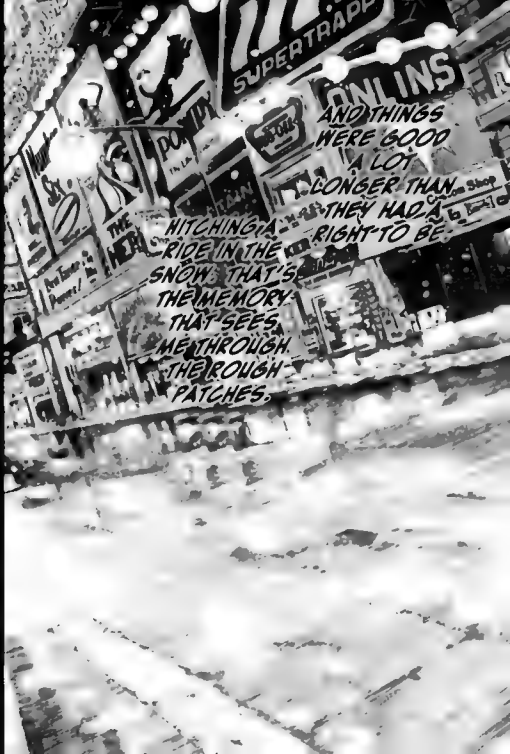
You watch. That's why they died.
Because you watch. Someone out there probably would have won a shitload of money if Kawada's win had been legit.
Not too fucking sick.

So...hands up!
How many of you watched for the blood and how many for the semen?
Come on, any Mitsuko fans out there? Kiryama? Fuckers...

I GUESS THIS IS WHERE YOU COME LOOKING FOR A HAPPY ENDING.
SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU.
OH, DON'T GET ME WRONG. WE MADE IT.

KAWADA'S THE ONE THAT STILL REALLY HURTS TO REMEMBER. I'LL WAKE UP CRYING AND KNOW I WAS DREAMING ABOUT HIM.
ME 'N' NORI... WE OWED KAWADA THAT MUCH.
YEAH...
I NEVER SAID IT TO HER.
.....
NOT EVEN WHEN THINGS WERE GOOD.

THINGS WERE GOOD ONE HELL OF A LOT LONGER THAN THEY HAD A RIGHT TO BE.


SUPERTRAMP
AND THINGS WERE GOOD A LOT LONGER THAN THEY HAD A RIGHT TO BE.
HITCHING A RIDE IN THE SNOW. THAT'S THE MEMORY THAT SEES ME THROUGH THE ROUGH PATCHES.

FUCKING GAME.
And now these words from our sponsors...

BATTLE ROYALE

Final Chapter Memorial Discussion:

Koushun Takami and Masayuki Taguchi

Battle Royale has just finished a successful five-year run. What are your feelings about its length?

Takami: Oh, it was long…! I didn't think it would be that long! (laughs)
Taguchi: But, I felt like if you try to do it thoroughly, that's how long it will take. I'm very happy I could finish drawing the entire thing.

The manga ended somewhat differently than the original. Takami-san, what are your thoughts on its revised ending?

Takami: In my novel, Shuuya Nanahara kills the soldiers without any remorse on the escape boat. But Taguchi-san didn't have Shuuya do that. So, while the manga at first paralleled my original version, by the end it became completely Taguchi-san's original story. Not that that's bad--I think that his sensibility really brought this version of the story to life. It seems that out of the two of us, I've got the inferior personality!(laughs)
Taguchi: Honestly, in my mind it's not an issue of which of us is good or bad--but it just seemed to happen this way naturally. Since this was published in a serial format, I had to differentiate between the various characters even more clearly than in a novel or movie. So Shuuya gradually developed a personality, almost like the character of a shonen manga, where a strong sense of justice caused him to say things like, "We shouldn't kill each other!!" Because I was trying to play up this characteristic in him, I felt that the manga version of Shuuya shouldn't kill the soldiers on the boat. It's almost like this character pulled me along through the story.
Takami: That sounds like we're getting into the technical aspect of how to write manga. But, beyond that, I think that's just Taguchi's style. For example, compared to director Fukasaku-san's movie version, Taguchi-san's stance is closer to my own. That said, Taguchi-san seems to have this all-encompassing love for people in general…whereas, I think that I am a little bit more mean. That's not to say I'm Kiriyama or anything…but I do think that I have a part that of me that views humans in the way one would view machines. Anyway, the manga version gives me a sort of effusive feeling…or closer still, a general, nonjudgmental love for humans.

Had you been planning this ending for a while?

Taguchi: Well, to answer that, I first need to talk about something rather personal. When I started this project, I had just recently become a father, so my frame of mind at the beginning was less jaded…to the point where I was leaning on the side of love in general. For example, my feelings concerning crimes against children were more acute than ever…and not to mention dealing with 9/11… When those things happened, I started thinking--not about revenge, but of how to deal with that human violence and still continue to live life while I was drawing. Of course, this is not an easy question to answer, but young people right now deal with a lot of issues (including these), so it became a song of encouragement. I just wanted to tell young people that they should keep looking for the answer…and that by just doing that, they could become worthwhile people.

Takami-san, in retrospect, were there any scenes you liked in particular?

Takami: Before the manga began running, I often wondered how the action scenes would play out…but as the story progressed, I really began to look forward to Taguchi-san's original parts. That's not to say the action scenes weren't great…because they were! Especially those involving the supporting characters, like when the couple, Yahagi and You-chan, have their discussion. I really liked that. In the novel, I wrapped up the backstory of how they got together in a few short sentences…but I felt it really began to stand strongly on its own when it was shown in manga format.
Taguchi: I like Yahagi, too…which isn't a surprise, since I modeled most of the characters after someone I know.
Takami: Did you model her after a girl who was in your class a long time ago or something?
Taguchi: Oh, there wasn't any particular person I had in mind for her…I just listened to a lot of women talk to get a sense of the unique outlook on life that they possess. On the other hand, You-chan is that pure, virginal part of myself that you don't want people to see. That virginal aspect is something I think all men want to hide.(laughs) As far as original parts go, for the section where the couple, Ogawai and Yamamoto, commits suicide, I feel like I fully grasped the idea that this is how I should do it. Of course, I really liked Akamatsu, Kiriyama's group, and so on…but as time passed, I started to feel more strongly about the characters, and the story just got bigger.
Takami: I was really impressed with the skillful way he distributed time among the characters. It's possible that in my novel, the main characters are actually kind of all alike. Of course their appearances and hobbies are different, but when it comes down to it, they're all the same. I guess you could say characters in a novel are what they are…while here in the manga format, they continue to change and grow. On the other hand, by adding in parts like how Sugimura is afraid to be violent and is troubled by this, or how Mimura has a proud, cocky demeanor, the characters are in a process of growing and evolving from there, I think.
Taguchi: I think that there's a technical and emotional side, and that this process utilizes them both.
Takami: By the way, in the character-ranking poll, Kawada was first, right? He came in at number one.
Taguchi: Yeah, but I think timing has a lot to do with that. That poll was taken while I was drawing Kawada's episode.
Takami: I think that even if that weren't the case, Kawada would have been first. I think that Kawada is really a "Young Champion"-esque character, after all *(Young Champion is the name of the magazine Battle Royale was serialized in.--Editor)*. Especially when paired with your art, Taguchi-san. Someone even said he looked like Bancho Kiyohara! (laughs) *(Bancho Kiyohara is a professional baseball player for the Yomiuri Giants.--Editor)* But, Taguchi-san's art really is directly descended from Osamu Tezuka *(Artist of Astro Boy, etc., considered the father of modern manga.--Editor)*. It's really very "manga-esque" art. But, I think because his art has very clean lines, it's easy to overlook this at times, too.
Taguchi: People tell me my art is reminiscent of "gekiga" *(gekiga: historical /serious comics)*, or that it's realistic, but it's really easy to put my own emotions into the faces, so it sounds strange if I say they're symbolic faces--but they are **manga** faces. Like, when they're sad, they bring their eyebrows down as far as possible, and so on.

Takami: Also, I feel like as the series went on, characters' expressions became more and more grown-up looking. But it wasn't necessarily a conscious thing, right?
Taguchi: In the beginning I was very conscious that everyone had to look like middle school students, but by the end I had specific expressions for certain things they would say. That allowed me to draw them more naturally.
Takami: Even though each character has different reactions to different challenges, there are elements that are universal throughout. That's why I think Taguchi-san's art was just so appropriate for this story.
Taguchi: There were many things I realized as an illustrator because I had a chance to work on this book…whereas before, it was almost as if a fog were covering it.
Takami: How so?
Taguchi: For example, in the middle of people's changing values and views, there is an occurring drama. I became able to perceive it in this sort of precise way within myself. I read what Takami-san had written, and in the various stages of taking that and turning it into a manga, it somehow became almost engrained within me. To compare it to singing, for example, it would be like creating your own distinct way of singing in these five years, one that isn't karaoke. So I'm very grateful for this experience.
Takami: No, no, not at all! (laughs) I think this is something you were able to grasp on your own, Taguchi-san--not because my original story existed or anything like that.

Any final comments?

Taguchi: I will keep creating different works and honing my skills… and if Takami-san writes a new story and there is a chance, I would love the honor of being allowed to draw the manga version. But, rather than doing it right away, I think it'd be more interesting to give it some time, first.
Takami: Well, even if we leave time, it might still become my next project!(laughs) But, I'll do my best. Also, I'd like to use this space to say thank you to all of our readers. Thank you so much for staying with us all these years!
Taguchi: Yes, thank you so much! I will work hard to make sure my next project is the best it can be!

Thank you both for your hard work. I am looking forward to your upcoming projects, whatever they may be.
And thank you everyone for reading!